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NATIONAL
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CATHOLIC
MOVEMENT

RURAL LIFE

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1967

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RURAL LIFE

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An Australian bi-monthly devoted to the building of the Australian way of life on a rural foundation. An Australian bi-monthly which believes that this end can be achieved only by the rebuilding of rural communities on a basis of positive, active and dynamic Christianity. An Australian bi-monthly determined to fight every attempt to disrupt the rural way of living.

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AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1967

"To Restore Christ to the Countryside . . . and the Countryside to Christ."

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RURAL LIFE EDITORIAL

The Convention Theme

The theme of the 1967 Convention, of which this special issue of Rural Life is a record, was "The Practical Implementation of Vatican II".

Those who read and study the various addresses will see that they deal with several sides of this implementation; and they will realise that the thread running through is the part the layman can play. Certainly, every member of the Rural Movement will gain much from these addresses; for they will help him to understand what his work in the Lay Apostolate entails.

The operative word in the theme was "practical". So much has been written about Vatican II that the layman can be pardoned if he finds himself lost in the maze of debate — and controversy — surrounding the Council deliberations, documents and decisions; and he feels like "giving it away". What he wants is not a subject for debate; it is something to DO.

For many years now, Rural Movement members have been carrying out the work the Church now desires and directs every layman to do. It may be said, then, that there is nothing for them to learn about the work of the Lay Apostolate. That is simply not so.

As one speaker at the Convention pointed out, the obligations of the layman are changing in a changing world. A real understanding of those changes is essential; and it is in giving that that the permanent value of this record of the Convention lies.

Once that understanding is gained "practical implementation" is a matter of course.

Presentation to Bishop Henschke

During the Convention, an illuminated address, and a cheque to be used in any way His Lordship wished, was presented to Most Rev. F. A. Henschke, D.D., Bishop of Wagga.

"You are all aware that the founders of the Rural Movement were the Bishops of Australia", N.C.R.M. president, Mr. M. Howley, said in making the presentation. "It was founded many years ago and, in their wisdom, the Bishops asked His Lordship Bishop Henschke to take the responsibility for it as Episcopal Chairman.

"In giving up the position last year, His Lordship said that he felt he was doing what was right in resigning; at the same time, he assured us that it gave him great pleasure to be handing over to one who would have been his choice had he been able to make it himself.

"I am sure, then, that some of the regrets Bishop Henschke had in resigning have been lessened by the fact that Bishop Warren has now taken over.

"This presentation is merely our way of saying: 'Thank you, my Lord', and to let you know that we do appreciate all you have done. There are times when it comes to expressing our feelings that we find we are quite unequal to the occasion; so, today, it isn't a question of eloquence — it is the fact that we have made up our minds to show some recognition to His Lordship, Bishop Henschke.

"His Lordship must be very pleased, indeed, not only because the Rural Movement is continuing its work, but also that so many of those here today are new and younger members.

"The Rural Movement must have been well founded — for several years we had no secretary and no organiser, but the work continued. That gives you some idea of how well it was founded. By the grace of God, the very sound foundation put down by His Lordship and Bob Santamaria, who worked with him in those early years, enabled us to keep the Rural Movement going.

"Having been in the position I now hold for two years, and so being able to examine the Rural Movement from the inside — something I had not done before — I feel quite satisfied and can assure His Lordship that the N.C.R.M. is coming to that 'second spring' to which he looks forward."

Bishop Henschke Replies

Accepting the presentation, Bishop Henschke said:

"I am very pleased that you have included on this testimonial the name of Bob Santamaria, because he was really the founder of Catholic Action and the Rural Movement in Australia. Had it not been for him not only founding it but also guiding it over so many years — and he is still doing his part — the Rural Movement would never have come into existence, or continued to exist.

"As Episcopal Chairman I got all the credit, but did none of the work. I came to meetings now and again, but the work was done by you people.

"I would not be human, however, if I did not appreciate this presentation, and the fact that you are so generous to show your appreciation of what I did for the Rural Movement — or that I remained in it so long.

"I do not need that testimonial to remind me of the years we worked together, of the work that we did and the disappointments we had; but it will be a constant reminder of those happy years and those difficult years. Perhaps, too, it will encourage me to say an extra prayer for you people who are carrying on the work.

"As Mike Howley has just said, it was a wrench to surrender the Chairmanship, but I felt the Rural Movement deserved somebody younger and more active. I was, indeed, very glad that the man chosen as my successor was Bishop Warren.

"I take the opportunity now to thank those responsible for having the Convention held in Wagga this year. I look upon it not so much as a compliment to myself or the Diocese as to our Diocesan organiser, Terry Fromholtz. He has done magnificent work in this Diocese and on the fringes of it, and I look upon this place being chosen as recognition of that work.



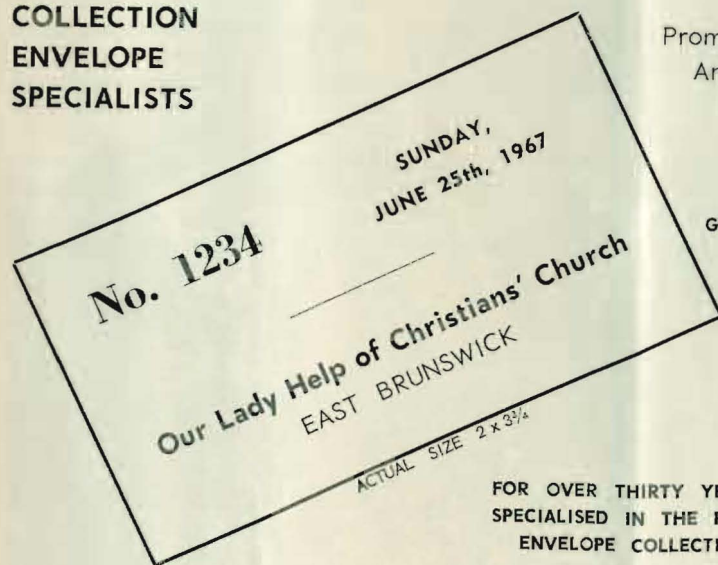
"That teaches us that if we want to progress — and we do want to progress — it is necessary to have more men in the field. We have said that all along, but finance is the difficulty. We cannot have more organisers until we have more members, and we cannot very well have more members until we have more organisers. It seems to be a 'vicious circle', but I am sure the Episcopal Chairman and this Committee will find some way of overcoming that.

"With your Chairman, I am very pleased that there are so many younger people here today. The time has arrived when older members have not the enthusiasm or the health necessary for carrying on the work, so it looks very promising for the Rural Movement that so many younger people are now active in it. We did not have that at the best of times. The middle-aged and the elderly — with a few young people — were the original members; but if we are going to have that "second spring", it must come from the young people.

"I welcome you all to Wagga and I am grateful that Bishop Warren found time to come here. You could not expect too many priests to come at the week-end, which is their busy time.

"I do hope the Rural Movement will go from strength to strength. Whether I am in this world or the next, I will always be interested in it, and by my prayers I will do my little part in keeping you going. God bless you."

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THE ADDRESS

"May it please Your Lordship,

We, members of the National Catholic Rural Movement, wish to express our gratitude to you for the inspiring leadership you have given to our Movement and yours over the long period of twenty-six years.

When Catholic Action was in its infancy in Australia and a Catholic Rural Organisation was to be an integral part of it, you were appointed to be its first Episcopal Chairman. You have been with us at National Conventions, at Regional Conferences, and often at Group meetings; and you have shown at all times your fatherly interest in this movement of Catholic Action, whose mission it is to bring Christ to the countryside and the countryside to Christ.

In your endeavours to implement the Church's desire to foster the first and most necessary kind of life for man and the life that is most conducive to Christian living, you have helped us all to think with the Church, to know what is of real value, to practise the Christian virtues and, above all, to give glory to God.

We know the close co-operation which existed between you and our first National Secretary, Mr. B. A. Santamaria, and we look back with pride on the leadership which produced such enthusiasm in our formative years, and which carried us on during more prosperous but, unfortunately, more difficult times. We feel sure that you will continue to be with us under our new leadership — with us in your prayers and by your encouragement — so that we may in this Movement continue to serve God and our fellow-men.

In this year of your Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee, we also wish to join with the people and priests of your Diocese in rejoicing over the fulfilment of your fifty fruitful years in the service of God and of His people.

On behalf of all the members of the National Catholic Rural Movement—

We are Your Lordship's devoted people in Christ,

M. G. HOWLEY (President) J. H. LARKINS (National Chaplain)

D. J. RUSSELL

W. J. MANNES

T. J. FROMHOLTZ (Organiser)

PAUL WILD (Secretary)

The Vocation of the Layman

(Dr. PAUL GRUNDY)
B.C.E., M.ENG., PH.D. (Cantab)

The subject suggested by the title of this talk — the vocation of the layman — is so vast that I cannot pretend to cover it adequately. It would be foolish to try. It might even be asked whether I can say anything useful, short of quoting from a book.

After all, many books are published on this subject every year. Can I add anything at all to *that*?

I believe there is still a lot to be said; and I also believe that it must be said by laymen. A lot of the books published are by theologians trying to understand in terms of the great mysteries of our religion the place of the layman in the world and in the Church; trying to see how the Creation, the Redemption and Our Lord's Second Coming penetrate the life of the layman.

Theologians can go only so far in this without the help of the layman. Laymen must bring their actual experiences to bear on the otherwise theoretical situations considered by the theologians. For the great mysteries of our Faith to take root in our lives, we must become aware, as Christians, of the world we live in. Not only must we become aware, but we must share this awareness with our fellow Christians, with the theologians — in fact, with the whole Church.

In sharing this experience, what it means in growing in union with Christ will become clear. Not only our own lives will be enriched by this sharing with the Church — the whole Church, the Mystical Body of Christ will be enriched.

Integrating the eternal truths

So there is a point when I, a layman, address to you, also laymen, a talk which of necessity has theological overtones, since I am going to attempt to share with you a way of looking at the world and the daily events in it which make up my life — a way which integrates the eternal truths of our Faith with our daily experience, and which, in doing so, gives meaning both to our religion and to our daily life.

How many of us have the feeling at some time of our life, if not now, that we are somehow failing as Christians through not being aware of Our Lord all the time? Sometimes, admittedly, our work requires our full concentration, and it would be in jeopardy if we kept stopping to "offer it up," or to mutter a short prayer; and on these occasions we must have felt that it was one of the necessary evils of this world that Our Lord would be "shut out" from our lives for a while.

Or, have we ever felt that if we omitted the Morning Offering our day's toil counted for nought in our salvation? These may be "way out" examples today, but certainly as a child I experienced these scruples. They stem, I think, from a very serious misunderstanding which I would express in two different ways: either it is imagined that the actual work we do is of no account in our salvation — a distraction from religion, in fact — or we think God has only saved our souls (and, as an afterthought, our bodies, too, on the Last Day, but somehow not needing air or food).

I have no hesitation in rejecting these scruples as quite harmful. The real importance of what we do materially, in our job and at every moment of this day, is hidden by these scruples. It is the purpose of my talk this morning to show the real purpose of our material labours, to show the vitally important part they play in God's plan for the world, and in bringing to fulfilment in our lives the mysteries of our Faith.

In his book, "The Advent of Salvation," Jean Danielou, S.J., an eminent theologian, makes a biblical and theological study of the great men of the Old Testament. At the end of a long discourse on Abraham he remarks:

"There is no point in speaking of him (Abraham) at all if it does not make us love him better."

This remark brought me up short at the time. We might think it sufficient to say that the purpose of writing the book is to increase our knowledge and insight. For Fr. Danielou that is simply not enough. For him, the study is an act which deepens his love for the persons and subjects considered, and he expects us to respond in the same way when reading it. It is true that knowledge and insight are legitimate ends of writing; but in pursuing these ends, the theologian grows in love, becomes more Christ-like, and fulfils God's will through his work.

What is true for Fr. Danielou and theology should be true for us all in any enquiry or activity in the world. Theology is not specially privileged here. Every activity, whether it be agriculture, engineering, or housework should be the means by which we express and deepen our love for God and His Creation. The activities will be at times quite humdrum, and the means will vary greatly.

Unlike the theologian's our means, in many cases, will be sheer physical labour. But the fact remains that it is through our jobs and responsibilities, not despite them, that we grow in love, share more fully in Christ's life, and bring about the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, here and now.

It is one thing for me to enunciate the principle that every moment of our lives counts eternally; it is quite another to see how this is so. I think the best way to do this is to describe how I have faced the question myself.

A personal experience

Some years ago, a group of us — Catholic engineering students — found ourselves confronted by the problem of seeing what engineering meant to us in terms of our Faith. There were many questions to answer. Does Christ call us to be engineers? Is it a vocation, or is engineering simply a harmless career, which will give us a living and leave us enough time to practise our Faith and do good works? Is there any way in which engineering, so patently engaged with material forces and resources, can be described as part of God's living action in the world, or is God's love only a "spiritual" act?

In facing these questions, we were under pressure not to waste time on such "theoretical matters," as they were called, but to get on with "practical charity." Practical charity was seen as making sacrifices on our part to help others, such as being hospitable to Asian students, and raising funds for the needy throughout the world. Of course, these demands were made of us, and we had to respond to them.

Fortunately, in responding to these practical demands as they arose, we were not put off consideration of those deep questions I have mentioned. If we had not pondered those questions, I would still be in the position today of regarding my professional and teaching activity as ultimately unimportant — a sort of purgatory, not good in itself but necessary — almost an obstacle to the apostolic life I should be living. I might even feel guilty about the enjoyment I derive from this work, this "purgatory."

How did we answer these questions? We found, quite simply, that engineering is co-operating with God in the Creation, and even more so it is an expression of Christ's action in redeeming the world.

Quite often, it is imagined that God's act of creating the world was something done once and for all at the beginning. It's all over by the end of the Book of Genesis — not, perhaps, accomplished in seven days, but certainly finished now.

We have only to think for a moment to see that this is not so. New life is constantly being generated. The material world has been changing and evolving since time began, with an ever increasing variety and complexity of forms and creatures. Rather than describe creation as a static act by which God began the world, it is more correct to describe creation as God's continuous action in forming and sustaining the world. Not just human history, but the whole pattern of the universe since time began, is God's creation.

God created a changing universe, and there is a very real way in which I as an engineer, and you as a farmer, co-operate in this act of creation. We know that creation mirrors the perfection of its Creator, and we must help to create that perfection.

Engineering is commonly defined as the mastering of the forces and resources of nature for the use and service of mankind. From the natural elements and material resources, engineers help to create a higher order of nature, to develop and expand our natural environment.

By co-ordinating the energy of rivers, selecting materials, by mining, by accurate measurement, by planning many interlocking activities of man, engineers bring about machines, electricity, water in the desert, a multitude of public utilities, transport and so on. We are surrounded with myriad examples of a developed and organised universe, much of which is the work of the engineer, God's agent in this creative work.

Lesson from Psalms

All these works, created by God out of love, give praise and honor to Him by reflecting His glory and showing it forth to all. The Psalms are full of praise for God through His creation, and I can do no better than quote one of these.

"Alleluia!

Let Heaven praise Yahweh:
praise him, heavenly heights,
praise him, all his angels,
praise him, all his armies!
Praise him, sun and moon,
Praise him, shining stars,
Praise him, highest heavens,
and waters above the heavens!

Let them all praise the name of Yahweh, at whose command they were created; he has fixed them in their place for ever, by an unalterable statute.

Let the earth praise Yahweh: sea-monsters and all the deeps, fire and hail, snow and mist, gales that obey his decree, mountains and hills, orchards and forests, wild animals and farm animals, snakes and birds, all kings on earth and nations, princes, all rulers in the world, young men and girls, old people, children too!

Let them all praise the name of Yahweh, for his name and no other is sublime, transcending earth and heaven in majesty, raising the fortunes of his people, to the praises of the devout, of Israel, the people dear to him." (Psalm 1:8).

Man's work, especially the work of farmers, is specially mentioned by the psalmist in this great litany. As engineering is a more recent phenomenon, I would like to add my own particular praises to this litany:

Praise him dams and viaducts,
Transports on mighty highways,
Foundries with rivers of liquid steel,
Let all machines and ceaseless generators,
reverberate the name of Yahweh!

To that psalm, which shows the profusion of natural things giving praise to God, we must add that man's rightful place is at the head of all, and his actions above all else in this world, give praise to God. God told Adam and Eve to "be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it." (Gen. 1, 28). All of this has been expressed by the Fathers of Vatican Council II, who have said, in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World:

"For man, created to God's image, received a mandate to subject to himself the earth and all it contains, and to govern the world with justice and with holiness; a mandate to relate himself and the totality of things to him who was to be acknowledged as the Lord and creator of all. Thus, by the subjection of all things to man, the name of God will be wonderful in all the earth. This mandate concerns the whole of everyday activity as well. For, while providing the substance of life for themselves and their families, men and women are performing their activities in a way which appropriately benefits society. They can justly consider that by their labour they are unfolding the Creator's work, consulting the advantages of their brother men, and are contributing by their personal industry to the realisation in history of the divine plan." (Sec. 34).

"Lord of the created world . . ."

Man's place as lord of the created world, so eloquently expressed by the Fathers, has been even more beautifully expressed in the Psalms:

"I look up at your heavens, made by your fingers,
at the moon and the stars that you set in place —
ah, what is man that you should spare a thought for him,
the son of man that you should care for him?
Yet you have made him little less than a god,
you have crowned him with glory and splendour,
made him lord over the works of your hands,
set all things under his feet." (Psalm 8).

I hope that I have now said enough to show that our bread-and-butter existence can and should be our means of co-operating in God's great act of love in creating the world.

Inspiring as this is, it is by no means a complete picture of our work. In any case, you may feel — with good reason — that I have been ignoring some of the hard facts of life. There is evil in the world, but in the description I have given it has not been mentioned. We have the power to do harm as well as good.

In other words, God's perfect plan of creation has been frustrated by the Fall — and it is still frustrated today by man's wilful acts. As much as we would like to co-operate in God's creation, as fallen creatures we frequently fail to do so. Nor is our work the pleasure it should be as God's gift to us. This was the punishment God gave to us, as he said in expelling Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden:

"Accursed be the soil because of you.
With suffering shall you get food from it
every day of your life.
It shall yield you brambles and thistles,
And you shall eat wild plants.
With sweat on your brow shall you eat your bread,
until you return to the soil,
as you were taken from it.
For dust you are
And to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3, 17-19).

The curse rests on your work and my work alike. Your crops and stock are sustained by rains and the warmth of the sun at some times; and at others they are destroyed by floods and drought. For me, machines break down, my knowledge of science is inadequate for the engineering problems I want to solve, I make errors of judgment; the same natural disasters which threaten the farmer threaten the work of the engineer.

The inefficiencies and frustrations are legion — so much so that we may even doubt if we are really helping at all to fulfil God's plan of creation. In a very real way, we battle against the elements when our desire is to collaborate with them. There is disorder where we would hope to find harmony. Indeed, we might have been tempted to give way to despair if God had not, at the time of the Fall, promised salvation for man, and that the serpent would be crushed by a descendant of Eve. And, of course, that has happened; the Redemption has come, even though it is not complete.

Material universe is not evil

Now, it would be wrong to suggest that the material universe is in any sense evil, even though events seem to conspire to frustrate man's attempts to physically subdue it. As I mentioned earlier, God made man the ruler and architect of the world, telling him to "fill and conquer it;" but, by his sin of pride, man not only fell out with God, not only lost the right of special relationship with him, but he also fell out with the world around him.

He lost those special gifts which enabled him to occupy his place as right ruler. So there is a sense in which the world, leaderless without a focus of order and direction, suffers disorder and conflict.

When God sent His Son to redeem the world, He not only restored the right relationship between man and Himself; He also restored the right relationship of love between man and man, and between man and the world. We now have the power to regain our rightful place in nature.

That is why we experience in the liturgy of Easter, especially the Easter vigil, not only a spiritual growth, but also a physical and emotional sense of well-being. It is not just our souls returning to God; we are returning. We are growing in union and physical harmony with God and the world. It is a physical resurrection that we look forward to on the last day. As Abbe Hasseveldt puts it:

"It is easy for us to slip into the habit of thinking that eternal life is a spatial reality, a nebulous world of spirits, into which pass the elect. We think of it readily as a survival of the soul; we say 'Man does not die completely, his soul lives on'.

"The Scriptures give quite a different picture. Eternal life is not first and foremost a reality outside time; it is a life of the world to come which will take the place of the life of this world. It is not a mere survival of the soul. It is a real life, for which we are preparing here below, which we await, and which to some extent we may anticipate in this life through grace, and in heaven through vision."

(The Christian Meaning of Hope).

As the resurrection on the last day will be our complete selves, so we must prepare ourselves completely for that day — not just our souls. And the liturgy especially the Easter liturgy, does prepare us completely. The sacraments, too, prepare body and soul. If I may quote Abbe Hasseveldt again:

"Think too of the discourse of the Bread of Life in the sixth chapter of St. John: 'He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood enjoys eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day' (Verse 54). Too often we consider the Eucharist only as food for the soul; Jesus presents it also as a pledge of the resurrection of the body. We must rediscover this emphasis in the Liturgy: 'A sacred banquet . . . in which we are given the pledge of future glory.'"

Such is God's love for us that in coming on earth He has actually given us more than we ever had before the Fall. To Adam, He was Yahweh, the rock, the immovable. He is much closer to us; He is our Father. What God has achieved in redeeming the world is glory even greater than that of the creation. So we say at the Easter vigil:

*"O inestimable love: to redeem a slave you delivered up your Son!
O truly necessary sin of Adam which was blotted out by the death of Christ!
O happy fault that merited so great a redeemer!"*

And in every Mass we say the prayer over the gifts: "O God, in a wonderful way you created and ennobled nature, and **still more wonderfully restored it . . .**"

Christ has not only saved man; He has restored all nature. He founded the Church to complete what He began, and it is up to us to bring about the restoration of all things in Christ in the world around us.

What is this world ?

And what is this world around us? The farm and the factory, the floods and the drought, the famines and the surpluses — all the excesses and deprivations of nature. It is in a state of almost chaotic disorder — but we are conquering it. It is our glorious privilege to share in God's action in restoring order. In fact, it is through us that this restoration is now coming about. As St. Paul said, we can say, too:

"I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me." (Gal. I, 20).

St. Paul is quite explicit in the fact that Christ came to redeem nature as well as man:

" . . . God wanted all perfection to be found in him and all **things** to be reconciled through him and for him, everything in heaven **and on earth** when he made his peace on the cross." (Col. I, 19-21).

There is no drawing the line here which limits the extent of the Redemption. All creation is redeemed. Again, as St. Paul said in a famous passage in his Epistle to the Romans:

"I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole of creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of the creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose; it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth, and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free." (Rom. 18-23).

This passage, which is the keynote of what I am trying to say in this talk, unfolds another vital aspect in the restoration of all things in Christ; namely, that it is not complete. Jesus ransomed us by His death and resurrection — paid the full price for us to be united with Him — but we are not yet with Him, and we do not see Him. We still pray: "My soul is still thirsting for the Lord, when shall I see Him face to face?" Likewise, nature is not fully redeemed. There is still decadence and disaster; that is obvious to us. So we live in hope, the hope that inspires St. Paul. The redemption will not be complete until Christ comes again on the last day.

We tend to look upon the last day as one of terror and destruction when all the old order will be swept away, so that the new will begin. We will see God face to face. We are not being swept away and replaced. We are going to rise again in glorified bodies reflecting the glory of our Maker.

We have an inkling of this in the Transfiguration. The apostles knew Christ the man, and believed, too, that he was God; but on the mountain God revealed Himself in all His glory to Peter, James and John. For a moment, they saw Christ in glory, a glory which we will share on the last day. In some similar way, nature will be transformed and glorified and the redemption complete.

So we are now living for the last day of glory, and we are preparing the world so that it, too, will be glorified. How are we preparing it? For me, as an engineer, I see particular ways in which my engineering activity does this; and I suggest that for each of you there will be ways in which your own work does this. Take the example of a dam, already referred to as part of God's creation. There is a powerful sense in which a dam restores to order and harmony the physical world.

What, before the dam was built, would have been a destructive and unpredictable flood, by means of the dam becomes a God-given bonus. Tamed and harnessed, harmonised to man's ends, the water yields up power to man, enriches the cultivated earth, disperses drought, stabilises production.

Or consider the aeroplane. Man-made flight is a remarkable achievement of physical balance and harmony. The atmosphere becomes less and less dangerous a place and more and more a convenient medium for man to conquer the limitations of distance. And the telephone, too, dispels most of the physical obstacles to the communication between men, anywhere in the world, thus physically reflecting that ultimate reality that we are to become brothers in Christ.

"We are all called . . ."

Is there anyone amongst us who is not similarly called to prepare the world for the Lord's triumphant return? We are called, and we must learn to see how our particular vocations are such preparation.

We have a few centuries behind us where the emphasis has been on saving our souls, and by implication everything material was corrupting and corruptible. St. Thomas puts the objection we might have, probably better than we could put it ourselves, as follows:

"Where there is no liberty there is no merit; where there is no merit there is no glorification; and since the world is not free it will not be glorified."

But he answers the objection by saying:

"Although insensible bodies will not have merited this glory, man has merited that this glory should be conferred on the whole universe." Vatican Council II has re-affirmed this in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. "Therefore, while we are warned that it profits a man nothing if he gain the whole world and lose himself, the expectation of a new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one." (sec. 39). (Note, incidentally, that Christ spoke of man losing his very self (Luke 9, 25) not his **soul**, as it has commonly and incorrectly been translated).

What does this all mean for our daily lives? It means that we can live a life that constantly expresses our faith, hope and love. We have faith in Christ who has saved us, and who works through us to restore the world to perfection in Him. We live in hope—the expectation that Christ will come again to complete the saving of the world and to complete our attempts to be His saving instrument here and now. And our action in the world is one of love. "God so loved the world that He sent His only-begotten Son to redeem it." Likewise, we love this fallen creation and express this love by working for that returned harmony between God, man and nature, that perfection at all levels, both spiritual and material.

All that I have attempted to show in this talk is the way that our ordinary daily lives, far from being the obstacle to a fuller Christian life, are God-given vocations by which we come to our full stature as Christians. By prayer and recollection we can come to a greater realization of the way our own particular vocation creates the world anew and prepares it for Our Lord's triumphant return. Just as for Fr. Danielou the whole point of contemplating Abraham was to love him better, so for us the whole point of meditating on our relationship with God and the world is to love them better; and greater love will be shown by more effective prayer and action.

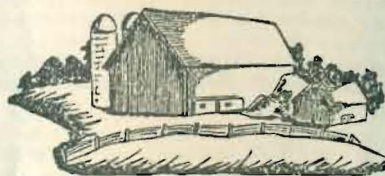
When we utter the prayer

"Come O Holy Spirit and fill the hearts of thy faithful
Kindle in them the fire of thy divine love.
Send forth thy spirit and they shall be created,
And thou shalt renew the face of the earth."

we really do mean the face of the earth — nothing less.

And when we have done that? I can do no better than to quote the Council Fathers:

"For after we have obeyed the Lord, and in his Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, and indeed all the good fruits of our nature and enterprise, we will find them again but freed of stain, burnished and transfigured, when Christ hands over to the Father: 'a kingdom eternal and universal, a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace.' On this earth that kingdom is already present in mystery. When the Lord returns it will be brought into full flower."



The Rural Movement and The Liturgy

(Rev. Father N. DUCK)

"God said 'Let us make man in my own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish in the sea, the birds of the heavens, the cattle or wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth.' God created man in the image of Himself. In the image of God. He created him, male and female He created them. God blessed them, saying to them, 'be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it.'"

Those words are well known as being from the first description of Creation in the Book of Genesis.

The word "liturgy" describes the work of God's people engaged in the worship and honoring of God. It was for this that man was created; it was for this that the world was created.

In a general way, every work that man does in the state of grace and charity with God is fulfilling the work for which man was created. It is the fulfilling of the command given by God to Adam to conquer the earth. It is an act of liturgy, an act of service, an act of homage to God because man has been made not only the sharer of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, but he has been made literally the High Priest of the material world of the creation of God.

We want to look first at the moment, at those aspects of the Sacred Liturgy we find spoken about so adequately by the Vatican Council.

Pope Paul said that "the liturgy was the first to be considered" — the first subject to be examined. "First," also he said, "in intrinsic works in importance for the life of the Church." So the first document of the Council, finally voted on and promulgated on December 4, 1963, was this Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. You know how greatly that Decree has affected — at least, up to date — the externals of our worship of God, particularly the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. You know that the changes that have been made were made not for the sake of change, but for the pastoral good of the people of God.

In speaking to members of the N.C.R.M., there is little need to explain the meaning of the word "pastoral." Those who so often busy themselves with the care of a flock easily understand the symbolism of "the Pastor and his flock." In fact, from its very beginning, the Rural Movement has always noted the frequent use of rural symbols by Our Lord in His preaching.

He was the Good Shepherd; He directed His apostles to pray to the Lord of the Harvest that He would send laborers into His harvest; He told parables of the lost sheep, the weeds in the crops, the Prodigal Son feeding the swine, the barren fig tree, the seed falling into the ground where it must itself die if it is to produce fruit. The spiritual teaching of the Rural Movement has drawn courage, inspiration and strength from these rural aspects of the Sacred Scripture and the Sacred Liturgy.

At the time of the Offertory procession, when grapes and flowers and bread and wine are brought to the altar, the Rural Movement is frequently reminded of the closeness to God of the vocation and the dignity of the rural worker. The liturgical blessings of seeds, of crops, of the harvest, of machinery that are to be found in the ritual — these have been spread widely by group members and their pastors to bring forward the relationship between God and the work that has mainly been the livelihood of Rural Movement members.

The Sacred Liturgy, then, which tells us the story of Redemption, the mystery of Christ, His presence with us, because as He said "where two or three meet in My name I shall be with them" — this has always been the spirit of the National Catholic Rural Movement. The place of the Gospel Discussion at group meetings anticipated the call to emphasise the importance of the Sacred Scriptures in the light that the Church has come out with in our own day — in these very days.

I know that there are some early Rural Movement members who still keep up their daily Scriptural reading. I hope there are many. The Liturgy of the Word of God is enshrined in the Rural Movement; and this is a practical question I would ask you — as delegates from Rural Movement groups, as Rural Movement members — to ask yourself: Is there in your home a good, readable translation of God's Word, of the Holy Bible? Do we, as an objective in the Rural Movement, make it part of our daily practice in the family?

The Vatican Council reminds us many times of the absolutely essential place of the Holy Eucharist, both the Sacrament and the Sacrifice, in the life of the individual, in the life of the family and the life of the community. We know that there are few rural families that will be able to get to week-day Mass, so it would be truly impracticable to exhort our members to aim at daily Mass and daily Holy Communion. Most will be fortunate if they can be at Mass on Sundays and some major festivals.

And so, for these ordinary Rural Movement members what has the Vatican Council to say? The emphasis is on the word "participation." You are a kingly priesthood; you are the whole nation; the priest says to you that it is "your Sacrifice and mine." First I would ask you to question yourself: Do you participate at the altar by the reception of the Blessed Eucharist as often as it would be possible for you to do so? Do you participate by your responses? Do you answer firmly in a good, strong voice as an expression of good, strong faith in those responses you are asked to make in the Mass and other practices of the liturgy?

Do you try to join in the beautiful, simple hymns that are being encouraged, whenever possible, at Mass? Do our men spontaneously offer themselves to read the Lessons, the Prayer of the Faithful? Do they offer to participate in the serving of the Mass, the training of servers? Is the church, and especially the altar, the object of the loving care of the congregation, particularly of Rural Movement members? Do you ever ask if you can have organised in your own small church a short Day of Retreat, even in country places?

All these are practical, obvious applications of the spirit of the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy as given to us by the Vatican Council. They are within the range of every Rural Movement group; they have been done; they need to be continued; they need to be deeper.

Just recently, Pope Paul, speaking to a group of Italian farmers said: "Love the land; love the Church. Love the land for the material bread; love the Church for the spiritual bread." When we recall the motto of our Rural Movement — "Restore Christ to the countryside and the countryside to Christ" — we know that this declares for us the apostolic purpose of our membership.

We want to sanctify the people of the countryside. We want to bring them to salvation in the circumstances of their daily life as they go about doing God's work. The Church has always thought, and the Rural Movement has always said, that there are special privileges and special values associated with rural living. We know only too well there are special problems and special needs. It is the same Church, although her garb may sometimes be different when she adapts herself; but the fundamentals of worship remain the same in the country church and the city church.

The apostolate of the Rural Movement is an apostolate of men and women, the Bishops, the priests, religious and lay people who are dedicated to the welfare of the rural people of God. The Rural Movement only came into existence because there were such people, who had the same destiny of eternal life and happiness. The Rural Movement came into existence to help such people to know better, to understand better, their high destiny, to attain it more easily.

The Rural Movement as such cannot be to those people the sacramental life of the Church itself directly. Its main work is to provide the means to influence the circumstances, to create the environment in which the pastors of the Church can lead the flock to this holiness and happiness. And so the encouragement of the Rural Liturgy, the rural blessings, the Rogation Day processions, the Retreats, will help the pastor in his work.

You know, however, that often material conditions will profoundly offset the possibility of the spiritual life. All of our experience tells us that there is at least a minimum of material well-being required before the spiritual can flourish, with the exception of those few souls whom God calls directly to the life of poverty. Pope Pius XII reminded us of this absolute necessity of at least the minimum of healthy economic conditions for the spiritual life of the people. And so it is the work of the Rural Movement, as of all lay apostolate organisations, to interest itself in these things, these institutions that affect the material conditions of the life of the people.

Even more, the Church is just not this parish, nor this diocese, nor this country. So the Rural Movement cannot close its eyes to the effects of such conditions on the lives of the people in other lands; and so the Rural Movement's work looks out across the whole field of the work of God and the work of man in the whole world. Thus, we find ourselves back at the thought expressed in my quotation from the Book of Genesis — of God's command to man to be "masters of all things on land and sea, to fill the earth and conquer it."

This is where the Rural Movement member will see his work of service to God, in every field of man's life on this earth. As an example, we were able to see this morning something that is probably not often thought of by the average Rural Movement member — this thought in the field of the engineer.

Man, as I said, has been made not only a sharer in the Priesthood of Christ, but in a special way the High Priest of the material world to offer the homage of all material things to God; to act as the priest for the plants, the animals and the material things of creation.

We will, therefore, promote where we can the Sacred Liturgy, strictly so-called; we will promote the Rural Liturgy especially as widely as we can; and we will take part in all the temporal affairs of men, so that we can promote that fuller liturgy, that fuller service of God that makes every work of man an act of worship of God. To do this we must, of course, start with ourselves. We must try to make of ourselves the type of individual that the Church puts before us in the model of the patron of the Rural Movement — St. Isidore, about whom this beautiful prayer of the Church will serve as a conclusion.

"O God, who taught Adam the simple art of tilling the soil, and who through Jesus Christ, the True Vine, reveals yourself as the husbandman of our souls, deign we pray, through the merits of Blessed Isidore, to instil into our hearts a horror of sin and a love of prayer, so that, working the soil in the sweat of our brow, we may enjoy eternal happiness through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen."

Episcopal Chairman's Address

(Most Rev. D. J. WARREN, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop, Wilcannia-Forbes)

There are many problems associated with your work in the Rural Movement, and I am quite sure that you are more at home with these than I should be; but, I think, basic to our Apostolate is the need that every one of us has to represent in his life the person of Christ Himself.

This is not a new message, but it is fundamental to our activity as Christians: that we do something positive all the while to show forth Christ.

To do this in our own life, our own way of life — whether you consider it a vocation or an avocation — the big point will be the representation of Christ to the world in which we live. In order to do this more fully and appreciably, it is necessary for each one of us to have a greater knowledge of Christ, the Son of God, and to be moved more and more by His Spirit.

There are two things practical, then, that you already confront: First, a knowledge of Christ derived from your study of the Gospels — Father, in his homily this morning at the Mass mentioned the need we have to read and study the Scriptures to know God better. Then, there is the need not merely to have the knowledge, but to translate our knowledge of Christ into action, not by ourselves but by His Spirit working in us.

For this we need a development of our sacramental lives. The Liturgy, the Sacraments in general and most particularly as Father mentioned — the Eucharist should be the source of our inner development in the Spirit of Christ, in order that we, individually and as group, can represent Christ to a world that is sometimes hostile to Him, but more generally just ignorant of Him.

There is an axiom that says: "Admiration that grows into love gives us a foundation that is indestructible." If, then, in our own lives we can get people to admire Christ and to love Christ, then the foundation of our life and work will be indestructible.

This is the goal for which we are all striving; it is the goal Paul Grundy set up in his address this morning; I think it is the goal for which we generally strive, even if sometimes we are not aware of it.

To enable Christ to be seen in our lives — this is the message of St. Paul. To do this we need to be practical, to have a better knowledge of the person of Christ, the Son of God, and to be moved by His Spirit.

I think this might be a foundation point for the rest of the Convention: Working from that Charity which is put into our hearts by the Spirit of God, whom we possess, and as followers of Christ and devoted to Him, we are able to go forth with confidence into a world sometimes hostile, sometimes not, and there represent Christ, the one mediator between God and man, with zeal and diligence, knowing that what we do is worth doing because of this.

Then, what we do becomes Christ in our lives, and we ourselves become Christ to others, who depend upon His salvation through us.

I commend, then, to you today once again the work of the Rural Movement. I commend your leaders; above all, I commend the work of your Chaplains, and trust that you will respond to the spiritual ministrations given you by them — that you may grow inwardly in the spirit of God; possess Christ's Spirit in your hearts always; and that this love of God will be the true motive for your everyday activity.

In this way, do your ordinary work. Fulfilling your vocation in life, you will do something positive and constructive towards what we refer to generally as "the Apostolate" — that is, putting Christ before the world, and forcing the world by our own personality and our own work, to accept this Christ in us.

This is true charity and a development of Christ's mission in His Kingdom.

I trust, then, that the deliberations of your week-end will be very fruitful in this regard, and that together we will pray for one another that this Spirit of God may fill our hearts so that every activity of ours will be an over-abundance of His Spirit welling out from us towards those to whom we devote our time and our life.

THE VOCATION OF THE FARMER

(Paul McGowan, B.A., B.Agr.Sc., B.Com., M.A.I.A.S.)

I was given two subjects for this talk; and I am going to talk essentially on the "Vocation of the Farmer" and use "Threats to the Family Farm" as an example of how this fits into the farmer's vocation in the national picture, and into the development of under-developed countries in the international picture.

I think what we understand by the "vocation of the farmer" is some sort of divine calling. It is not just that it happened that we were called to something; it implies, in the terminology we have been using this morning that we have a special call to do what we are doing.

Dr. Grundy has painted the picture very well of the obligation of the layman in general; I would like to go a little further and point out that the farmer has a special calling both as a farmer and a layman. I will treat this vocational aspect of it particularly in relation to Vatican II, quoting from the Council documents.

I started to read these documents as an obligation — I think many of us in the N.C.R.M. do things like that, because we think we ought to do them. However, when I began on them I found they were not hard reading at all; I would recommend them to you all personally.

Some of you, no doubt, will have studied the documents at greater length than I have; but for those who have not, I would say not to be frightened of them. So many of the Encyclicals we are supposed to read are long and boring and don't get to the point, but these documents are well-edited and no burden.

This is a pretty personal talk I am giving; but it is as I see the position, and I am not making apologies if I commit heresy!

The meaning of Vatican II documents was to me an absolutely soul-shaking experience. I have been brought up in a very tight-knit structure of the Church; I have been, as one might say, efficiently brain-washed from the cradle to an age I don't exactly remember. We all grew up with the Church as a monolithic body. What the Church said was right; all was black and white without any greys. . . .

The whole message of Vatican II seems to be saying: "Things are changing, and if the world is changing the Church must change. If the Church is changing, the people in it will change. What was good enough fifty years, or twenty years, ago for you laymen is no longer good enough. You have different obligations."

Vatican II also makes it pretty clear that there is plenty of room for doubt. There are many issues that arose in the Council documents and they are purposely left vague. In effect, the Council Fathers have said: "We are not going to give an answer on this. There is no clear-cut answer. It needs more thought."

One extract I will now read seemed to me to indicate how the Council found itself in difficulties:

"Today the human race is passing through a new stage of history. Profound and rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the world. Triggered by the intelligence and creative energies of men, these changes

recoil upon him, upon his decisions and desires, as an individual and collective; upon his manner of thinking and speaking with respect to things and people.

"Hence, we can already speak of a true social and cultural transformation, one which has repercussions on man's religious life as well. As happens in any crisis of growth, the transformation has brought serious difficulties in its wake. Thus, while man extends his power in every direction, he does not always succeed in subjecting it to his own welfare. Striving to penetrate further into the deep recesses of his own mind, he frequently appears more unsure of himself. Gradually and more precisely he lays bare the laws of society, only to be paralysed by uncertainty about the direction to give it."

This sums up the situation pretty well, not only as the Council saw the Church, but as I saw the Church's teaching after reading the documents.

That same document — on the Church today — goes on to say:

"By this very circumstance, the traditional local committees, such as father-centred families . . . villages, various groups and associations stemming from social contacts experience more thorough changes every day."

Again, this is emphasising the question of change all the time. The next paragraph says:

"This kind of evolution can be seen more clearly in the nations which already enjoy conveniences of economic and technological progress, though it has also stirred among people still striving for such progress and eager to secure for themselves the advantages of an industrialised and urbanised society."

Searching for the way

This is the message I got out of that: This is a social evolution that is going on in the Church. There is this questioning — a searching in the Church itself — on the way the Church should be going, a searching for the way, the truth and the light that is the Church.

In these documents, the Church specifically states that she recognises that, as the Church itself is today, she has many imperfections; she even goes so far as to ask pardon for these imperfections. The Church is still looking to find the way, the direction.

I thought that part of the thought behind that meant that the Church does not yet exist. There is an obligation placed on us laymen to make the Church exist as she ought to exist. We are certain to find what the Church should be; we are striving to help the present imperfect Church evolve into the perfect Church it should ultimately be; and this will not, and cannot, happen without our efforts. We must all contribute to this evolution.

The document goes on to say, as I understand it — to stress the importance of the responsibility of the laity as well as the hierarchy: "In order that they may fulfil their function, let it be recognised that all the faithful, whether cleric or lay, possess a lawful freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought and of expressing their minds with humility and fortitude in those matters in which they enjoy competence"

Now, what is the field in which we, as farmers, have competence? This is where the problem of the vocation of the farmer comes in.

It seems obvious that we have competence in being good farmers. We have a certain amount of knowledge; we know how to be efficient; we have a body of knowledge amongst farmers, not only of Australia but of the world, that will enable us to fulfil the broader tasks that are placed by the Council on the nations of the world. The foremost of these is the question of feeding the world. It behoves us in our vocation to pay attention to this.

No "thinking in isolation"

The documents also point out in some detail that we cannot possibly justify thinking in isolation. Every social group must take account of the needs of other groups. The documents say in very strong terms that all men must have available to them the necessities for leading a truly human life; that they all have the right to food, clothing, etc.

To quote again: "*In our times a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbor of every person, actively helping him when he comes across our path, whether he be an old person abandoned by all, the foreign laborer unjustly looked down upon as a refugee, a child born of an unlawful union and suffering for a sin he did not commit, or a hungry person who recalls the voice of the Lord: 'As long as you did it for one of these, the least of My brethren, you did it for Me.'*"

I was also very impressed when reading through the documents to see a change of emphasis that seemed to be saying that, as the Church and the social order go through this evolutionary process, our obligations are becoming of a different nature.

Again a quote: "Today, however, especially with the help of science and technology, man has extended his mastery over nearly the whole of nature, and continues to do so. Thanks primarily to many kinds of interchange among nations, the human family is gradually recognising that it comprises a single world community, and is making itself so. Hence, many benefits once looked for especially from heavenly powers, man has enterprisingly procured for himself."

(I thought that last sentence — on our change of attitude to Divine Providence — very neat.)

It is no longer good enough to say that we just accept things — even droughts — as Divine Providence. There is no reason at all why it is not within the competence of man to control the weather; and it is not correct any longer to blame God for plague and pestilence; for these are within man's power to alter.

This evolutionary process has always gone on. In the primitive state of man, his obligation was obviously to his own family. As the centuries have passed, man's obligations have become wider; there has evolved an obligation to his community, his bigger social grouping.

As we grew up in the national context, it became obvious that we, as Rural Movement members, had our obligations in the national sphere; it is only now that the obligation in the international sphere is emerging clearly.

Must look at whole world

That is stressed in the Council documents, and there has just been published a new Encyclical which is devoted entirely to the international obligation. The Pope is pointing out that, in this period of history, communications have changed, barriers formerly existing no longer exist, and we must look at the whole world.

I would like to tie this up with Bishop Warren's statement of a few minutes ago. The Council documents seem to be saying in this regard that you must measure your social actions by charity. That is the real guiding force. We have always known this. There is nothing new about it at all; but there is a change of emphasis. The Church seems to be saying that devotions are good, but the Christian obligation is really the important thing. You can't shelve your Christian obligation internationally by just saying a few prayers.

Because of the implications of these national and international obligations, it is quite obvious to us in the Rural Movement that as individuals our ability to

do something about these problems is very limited. We know that it is only as part of an organisation — the inter-play of our brains acting together at a Convention like this — that we can formulate policies and gather confidence in ourselves, to know that sometimes what we are thinking is not such a "hot" idea because we can persuade other people that it is a good idea.

We form a policy, decide on a direction in which we should be going. In the international sphere much of the work must be on a government basis; so we have the added obligation to make sure, through our farmers' organisations that these policies are put through to the government as national policies.

Although we cannot do much unless we work through organisations, it is almost impossible for an organisation to work well unless it has some individual who will see to it to sow the germ of an idea, or move a motion at a meeting. This is where we in this room have a special obligation.

Those who come to these Conventions are already well trained; but we all learn a lot from the talks and, as individuals, we can go back to work through the organisations we are interested in. We drop an idea at a meeting; the idea is accepted by the group we are working with; we can then go on and help formulate national policy.

Another point the Council documents made clear to me is that we are not to look to the Church for the answers to our problems. We are to accept the principles from the Church, but in the social order we are to use our own initiative and commonsense.

"The Church guards the heritage of God's word, and draws from it principles without having always at hand the solution to practical problems. Let the layman not imagine that his pastors are always such experts that to every problem which arises, however complicated, they can readily give him a concrete solution, or even that such is their mission. Rather, enlightened by Christian wisdom in giving close attention to the teaching authority of the Church, let the layman take on his own distinctive role."

Our role as farmers

What is our distinctive role as farmers? Put simply, this seems to me that our vocation is to be good farmers. Relating this to what Dr. Grundy said this morning, we must also take our full part as laymen as well as farmers. This would imply a full spiritual life, recognising all parental responsibilities and the social and cultural obligations in our own families.

Doing the best possible job as a farmer implies in addition that, in running one's farm, one should be as good a husbandry man as possible. It means maximising production and being efficient and economical. In generalising, it is to do what Dr. Grundy told us was our job — to subdue the earth, to aim to have the whole of nature that comes within our domain subdued, so that it is farmed well.

For these first two aims in the farmer's vocation, the medium in which he generally moves is the family farm. That being so, if there are threats to the family farm, we must consider them.

I do this now in some detail as an example of taking one little aspect out of the whole context, and enlarging it to try to see what the problems are and, possibly, what are the individual obligations of a member of the Rural Movement.

In my opinion, the family farm is the most efficient agricultural unit. It implies that there is more than one labor unit on the farm; that it is not just a one-man unit, and that other members of the family help. It may be father and sons, or it may be that a younger family helps; but, in my opinion, the family farm implies that it is a reasonably sized farm and big enough to maintain a family.

That does not necessarily exclude one-man farms. These can also be economic and desirable units; but there are certain difficulties in one-man farms. The

demands are, perhaps, more acute; then there is the reliance on the help of one man — particularly in managerial skill and technical ability — to cover all the jobs that are required.

Again, there are the problems relating to plant size, much of the agricultural plant being of optimum size, making it very difficult to have efficient operation below this. But, despite all these difficulties, we can make decisions that make the one-man farm work. Over the years the Rural Movement has given much thought and study to such things — for instance, there has been the general emphasis on co-operatives.

These, in my thinking, are essential to the operation of one-man farms. Where we have relatively small-sized farms we must have co-operation between neighbors. The use of co-operatives can be expanded in many directions: even where we have difficulties with plant, there are no insuperable obstacles to the working of many items of farm plant on a co-operative basis. On the other hand, we can put up several reasons why this sort of co-operation will not work. One of the strongest of these is the pride of the farmer who wants to have complete control over ownership and operation of accepted plant.

Family farms were too small

The family farm is desirable from a sociological point of view, with one proviso: it must be big enough to give the operator more than a wage. One of the reasons why family farms fell into disrepute was because they have been too small, and the income has not been sufficient to maintain a living standard comparable to that of other groups in the community. The profit from the farm has, of course, to do much more than provide a reasonable living standard. There must be enough surplus to pay the interest on indebtedness as well as to make substantial contributions to loan reductions.

I feel that, sociologically, the reasons for the family farm would be well accepted. It provides a healthy atmosphere in which the family grows up; it gives a spirit of independence to the operator and his family; and it develops character.

Nationally, we know the old kind of reasons — "the farmer is the backbone of the country"; he is a stable political unit; and he is a good source of population increase for the city!

Internationally, the position of the family farm in many countries is entirely different from what we are used to thinking here. It is also very interesting to look on the changes in recent years in non-Christian countries — particularly in the Communist countries in their efforts to make non-family farms work.

The general movement to collective farms and communes has, by and large, been a failure from the purely economic efficiency point of view. This is one of the most important reasons why the Free World is so much further ahead in food production than the Communist world. The Communist countries are generally importers of food, despite the fact that they have quite sufficient agricultural areas. The large commune-type collective farm does not seem to work efficiently.

The reason for this seems to be the fundamental one that the incentive of private ownership is lacking — and to get efficient work on farms there seems to be a need for more incentive than there is in industry. The skill required and the interest in each particular job still favor the family farm.

So, if we accept that the family farm has much to commend it, we can look at the position historically and see what the threats to it are. In spite of a great deal of activity to assist closer settlement, figures show that what is happening very often is the properties are getting larger and larger all the time, and the number of agricultural holdings in Australia is decreasing.

Historically, in Australia, the father of the family bought his land or, possibly, selected it. He generally improved it; he was lucky enough to get a big grant; there may have been room to subdivide his original holding and settle on it two of his sons. When he died he left it to his wife; she, in turn, left it to the eldest son.

Not so long ago, the value of such a farm would probably be £10,000. Property of this size still attracts most Probate Tax today. Again, if we look back fifty years, the farmer really had no Income Tax problems at all. He was well "below the bracket".

Altogether, this type of system did work fairly well. The threats in existence then were personal: the father held control until he died; the sons would often not accept his parental authority when they had grown up to be big boys of 40 or so, they would not stay on the farm — they wanted things their own way, and often they went to the city. Or, again, they wanted their own farms and would leave the family farm.

Another threat, too, was the very poor amenities existing in the country in those days, particularly compared to the city.

Income Tax "serious problem"

With the changes today, Income Tax becomes a very serious problem on the good-sized farm. As I see it, the reason for this is a rise in rates during World War Two — not severe on low incomes, but very sharp as it got into a higher income bracket. Actually, Income Tax rates have not changed much. All that has happened is that everybody has moved up, so that those who were in a low tax bracket now come into a relatively high tax bracket.

Also to be considered is the general increase in the value of products. Since these tax rates were fixed wheat has gone up five times greater in value. Obviously, then, Income Tax becomes a problem.

The way this was tackled normally, and is still tackled, on family farms is by a family partnership to split the income instead of Dad paying all the tax and giving the boys some pocket-money. The mother and the children are drawn into the partnership and a multiple income is obtained, so that each individual is only paying a relatively minor amount of Income Tax.

The Probate problem for the family has become more important as the years go on. The increase here is largely due to the increase in land valuation. There is an old saying I think is terribly true: "The farmer lives poor and dies rich". That is why farmers are always grumbling about high probate.

To give a practical example: I do not think 700 acres would be considered a big farm anywhere in this region. Its present value would probably be £50 an acre; the present probate would be £23,000 — the full value of the farm just a few years ago. Post-war you could have bought the whole farm for what Probate Tax would be today.

Two Probates "real threat"

If we go back to the example I gave of the father leaving the farm to his widow and the widow leaving it to her son, we see the problem many families face — two probate taxes in a few years. This threat to the family farm is certainly a real one.

Income Tax, unless it is handled wisely, poses a threat to the family farm in that most farms require a fair amount of money spent on development. If we go back and accept the suggestion I made at the beginning of this talk — that one of the important parts of the vocation of the farmer is that he must subdue the land — you will see that it takes a lot of money to do this. The only place this can normally come from is income. So he must cut down his living expenses and put some of his income into savings. The income must be really good to afford this.

I do not say there are no answers to these threats; but this is the position as I see it. The sting of Probate Tax may be avoided in various ways — life assurance

policies, gifts by the father to his children, the formation of family companies are some of the ways of tackling the problem.

Having said all this, I do not think Income Tax or Probate is a threat at all. I really think that the taxation laws have been one of the best things that have happened sociologically in recent years. I say this because they have forced families into family partnerships. Surely this is a good thing. It has given the sons and the children some say in the running of the farm before they would have had it if there was no tax problem.

As far as probate is concerned, this has most effectively handed over control and management of the family farm to the younger generation. Personally, I cannot see that these two tax problems handled well have not been anything but assistance to the family farm.

Another threat often mentioned is the influx to the country of city businessmen — professional men in the towns going out and buying properties and putting the price of these up too high. Everybody else must suffer just because the price of land is rising; and because land values are going up probate and taxes are very high.

This is supposed to be a very serious problem. I wonder! Close to the capital cities there is some evidence of it being a problem; but when I look at the country areas of Australia generally I find it is a jolly good farmer who buys the land. . . .

I cannot see that, despite all these prejudices, land is dear even at today's prices. Obviously, it is very dear for some people who farm land inefficiently; but for people who farm well there is still a very satisfactory margin in profit making on buying, even at the high prices.

Another threat is thinking romantically of the land.

How Australia was settled

It used to be possible in the past for anyone who had an unsuitable job in the city to pack up, go bush and be a farmer. This (traditionally) was the way Australia was settled. Had it not been for the failure of gold mining, making it necessary for the miners a century ago to leave the fields and go out and clear the land, we would not have had the country opened as it was.

The old cry was: "Unlock the land for the miners!" I think this type of attitude persisted in the Soldier Settlement policies — certainly after World War One — and it probably persisted in the 1930's, when the "depression thinking" was that the land was an escape-valve for the cities.

Those times have gone, and I cannot see why we should look at the land as an "escape-valve". The world demands food, and our obligation as farmers is to produce as much as we possibly can to meet the problems of world hunger.

The general complexity of farming and the skills required of the farmer today put the romantic type of thinking right out of the picture.

As far as amenities are concerned, I think we have overcome many of these problems. The amenities we need on a farm are a bitumen road to the door, good television reception, an automatic telephone exchange and a school bus passing the door. It is surprising what a high percentage of farms in the settled areas now have these.

Twenty years ago, one policy of the Rural Movement was getting amenities to the country. Due to ourselves and the organisations for which we work, the picture has changed dramatically. In many cases, the amenities enjoyed by farmers are better than those of city people. For instance, he can get his children on a free bus to school; often parents in the city cannot.

There is another question I did not know the answer to: the old bachelor who buys up all the land. I thought that well he might; but he must die some time — and someone else will get a chance at his land then!

Coming back to our vocation as farmers and our position as Rural Movement members: If these threats exist, none of them need be accepted. None of them is inevitable; all are subject to policy decisions. Agitation through the right channels can alter the imposition of tax burdens. If we think, say, that Probate Tax falls unfairly because there might be a man dying young and leaving the problem to children who are not old enough to pay the heavy tax, this can be altered by forming a correct policy that probate should be at a different rate if properties are left to young children, or even to older children.

We could have taxation incentives to assist the formation of co-operatives; we could have co-ops to assist with manager efficiency. We already have a fairly enlightened policy re the development of family farms; we can have lending on reduced interest rates; we can have restricted titles for family farms.

All of these things are within our means of control with a little bit of thought to find the policy and agitate through our organisations.

Starting farming without money

Passing on to another aspect, I still think there are many ways we can overcome these threats, and solve the problem of how to get started in farming without any money!

The historic idea was that anybody could be a farmer. Nobody would accept the idea that anybody could be a businessman or an executive of a steel company. He is expected to be well and suitably trained. If he wants to go into business, he is expected to have some capital. So, I cannot see why the community should expect that farming should require any less training or capital than any other sort of business.

In spite of that, however, there are many ways and opportunities for people who are really keen to get a start without capital, though obviously they cannot get a start without suitable training.

There are many avenues open, both in the academic field and in the hard field of experience.

One of the greatest shortages in the rural community today is good farm labour. Although the blame for this is often on the farmer who will not pay a fair wage, I am sure that many farmers are prepared to pay a very attractive wage and give good conditions to people who are really worth it. I think, too, that there is a great deal of — shall we say — laziness with labour. This is very evident in industry. The type of person who puts his name on the register for farm employment is not satisfied with his job in the city; he goes out into the country and takes the same poor attitude to labour with him.

The good farm labourer is assured of a job anywhere, and if he proves that he will work well and hard most good farmers are only too pleased to give him some incentive payment if he really shows he will work, and puts up a reasonable proposition to his employer.

I am very keen on share-farming. Any number of farmers who are well-established today got their start that way. There are openings for share-farmers without plant and without capital at all if they are prepared to work hard. There are also openings for people with some plant, and for those who get out into the field and acquire the knowledge by contract work.

The stories of shearers who worked very hard, bought a bit of land and then acquired more are legends throughout the country. I think the reason why there is not more of this is that many people who think they would like to get started without money have romantic ideas. When the acid test is on, they just fold up: they are not prepared to work the much longer hours required in farming than in industry. It is only right that this should be so, because if a man wants to have a farm worth \$100,000 when he dies he is not going to get it unless he works harder than the average in the community. If he only wants to work his 40 hours, he will finish on a wage; but I believe the present has as many opportunities as the past.

Turning again to the vocation of the farmer: I think it is obvious that it calls him to take his part in farmer organisations. He cannot achieve changes of policy on his own; but he can help achieve them if he is in farmer organisations. He can bring a matter up for discussion at branch meetings and follow it through at State conferences. Policy changes do not come easily, but they do come with continued pressure.

I want to direct the rest of my talk to the international vocation of the farmer. Farmers of the world — all farmers — must certainly realise their obligation to feed the world. If we have the land and the world is short of food, it surely is our obligation to rectify the position.

A special obligation rests on farmers of the more advanced countries because these countries were in an advanced state when we were born, and research and knowledge are already at a high level. We have knowledge of techniques the under-developed countries do not have; and, as Australian farmers, we have the obligation to assist fellow-farmers in other countries.

As Australian farmers, we pride ourselves on our system of farming. We think family farms are good and that being so, we have an obligation to bring about the family farm system in other parts of the world where, in general, they are the exception rather than the rule.

Must spread our knowledge

If our technical knowledge is good, it is up to us to spread it; if we have good legislation (most farmers in under-developed countries would think Wheat Stabilisation a terrific piece of legislation, because one of their big problems is the instability of markets) it is our obligation to get this type of thinking in poorer countries.

We contribute to industry funds, some of which are used overseas. Is there any reason why we should not forego a little of the return on our investments in the short run to get a long-term advantage by using more of these research funds in the under-developed countries?

Let me quote again from the Council documents, because I think that the Council discussed problems at length, and it is surprising to find — or realise — how well the Council understands the problems of farmers:

"Existing conditions of life and work sometimes thwart the cultural strivings of men and destroy the desire for self-improvement. This is especially true of country people. They need to be provided with working conditions which will not block their human development, but rather favor it.

(In other words, I think they realise that farmers come in fairly tired at night, and do not feel like going out to a meeting!)

"In many areas, too, farmers experience special difficulties in raising products, or selling them. In such cases, country people must be helped to increase and market what they produce, to make the necessary advances and changes, and to obtain a fair return. Otherwise, it too often happens that they will remain in the condition of lower-class citizens. Let farmers, especially young ones, skilfully apply themselves to perfecting their professional competence, without which no agricultural progress can take place."

The general attitude the Council seems to be putting is: "Take a guide from the Church and have a go!"

Most important obligation

I do not want to infringe at all on Paul Wild's talk ("Aid to Under-developed Countries") but I want, as briefly as possible here, to paint a picture because, in the present context, this is the single most important obligation in the vocation of a farmer.

Pre-war, the under-developed countries of the world — Asia, Africa and South America — were net exporters of grain, exporting 11 million tons a year. Now, each of them is an importer of grain at an increasingly rapid rate, bringing in 27 million tons a year.

In some spheres in these under-developed countries there has been enormous progress, particularly in the medical field. Infant mortality rate decreases, life expectancy increases; and so we have the much-talked about "population explosion". A couple of examples will show the importance of this.

In the West Indies in 1950, infant mortality was 150 per thousand live births; in 1960 it was 30. Life expectancy in Puerto Rico, which is part of the West Indies, is today substantially greater than it is in the U.S.A. itself. Health services in India have greatly altered life-expectancy: in the past 20 years it has risen from 27 to 48 years. Just think of the implications of this — they are child-bearing years. It shows what the "population explosion" really is.

Perhaps you say that that does not concern us; but what do concern us are the agricultural implications.

I have figures available for the main crops for very easy comparison. They are for 1935-39 as pre-war indicators, and for the first three years of the 60's as indicators of today's production.

In the U.S.A., rice yields have gone up over the period from 22 to 35 cwt. an acre; in India, the position is fairly static — from 11 cwt to 13 cwt. Pre-war, Thailand was a large rice exporter; she is now an importer.

Rice does not mean as much to us in general as wheat; so here are the comparative wheat figures in bushels per acre: U.S.A., up to 13 to 25; India, a slight increase; Australia, up from 12 to 18. Now I quote Mexico as an interesting example — up from 11 to 25. Figures of other commodities follow the same pattern. The under-developed countries are static in productivity; the developed countries are going ahead like steam.

The international situation in our giving of help to these under-developed countries is peculiar.

Negating our aid

One part of our policy is to do all we can to help; the other part is to look after ourselves without caring what the implications are to other people. Although some countries are most generous — America, particularly, is fantastically charitable — in what they are doing for under-developed countries, at the same time we have the parallel movements that are negating much of this help. I will try to explain that.

The Western countries are progressing very fast in technical knowledge and improved living. We have done so imperceptibly in our homes. For example, we use detergents instead of soap. It may seem to have a very small effect if every housewife in Western countries makes this small change, but it has an enormous effect on under-developed countries.

So many of these countries have one export. If this is some type of vegetable oil used in soap, the market disappears as detergents take over. The under-developed country finds itself with no export commodity, or faces a very sharp decrease in price available for its one export.

The same applies to synthetic fibres. We feel the impact in Australia, but it is much more important in some of these under-developed countries. Silk is out; cotton is feeling the pinch, as is hemp in India. They are all affected because of our increased technical knowledge. Rubber was the chief export from some of these countries; synthetic rubbers are very rapidly taking its place. As well as

doing that, it knocks the bottom out of market expansion. What are they going to grow in Malaya for export?

With regard to agricultural crops, other countries have policies of self-sufficiency. Because the farmers in Western Europe demand a subsidy on sugar-beet it is highly subsidised. This means that cane sugar is not imported. The countries producing cane — the West Indies, particularly — are very badly hit because of the substitution of one product for another.

We are not without blame in this direction — we have acted similarly in Australia as far as I can remember. Once we got beautiful bananas from Fiji; but then we decided that Northern N.S.W. could grow bananas, even though they were not as good. It was helping local industry, so we stopped getting bananas from Fiji. We do this with so many other things because it is our national policy, just as all the developed countries protect and subsidise their own agriculture.

These are policy questions, and they have very wide implications. The nett result is that, at the moment, per capita food production in many under-developed countries is decreasing. In the developed countries it is increasing. The sky's the limit.

I would like you to look at some figures on the chart I have been using — those concerning Mexico. It seems that the picture I have been painting is very pessimistic. Need it be so? How could it happen that Mexico, a very primitive and under-developed country, could increase wheat yields so enormously? They are better than the U.S.A. or Australia. As an under-developed country, Mexico is a good example to others such.

I have listed a ten-year period, 1945-55. The average yield was 15 bushels an acre on an acreage of 1½ million. In 1955, the average yield had gone up to 22 bushels an acre. Now, Mexico is self-sufficient. The current yield is up to 51 bushels an acre, and the area sown has doubled over a ten-year period — and Mexico is a substantial exporter of wheat.

An example from Mexico

This has happened because the Rockefeller Institute, with a very enlightened policy, went into Mexico and began a wheat-breeding program. They said: "All the results of our research will go out at village level. We will build up the research program with an extension program. The farmers will be on-side. We will make sure that results are there; that this is a team effort." With a relatively small financial outlay, they have achieved this result.

We in Australia also happened to benefit just by chance from the work of the Rockefeller Foundation in Mexico. We now have the different varieties that lifted production from 15 to 51 bushels. They are here at Wagga Research Station, being used as parents of future Australian wheat.

Mexico and Taiwan are good examples of how wise aid from U.S.A. can lift production. Japan is another. This has been done without upsetting the traditional social pattern. There has been no attempt to reduce the labor content of agriculture, which is still very high. Labor is no problem: you must find something to do with the people; so a system of high labor content and high productivity has been developed.

The problems, as we see them, impose an obligation on all sections of the community. At the national level in government there are questions of subsidising home agriculture. Do we exclude textiles imported from under-developed countries? Medical science has great obligations as far as the population problem is concerned. Psychologically and sociologically there are enormous problems involved. You cannot just go into a primitive country and say you should be doing this or that. These countries have centuries of tradition, and to change that is a very slow job.

Economists have obligations, because economic policy matters in these countries affect us. Religious leaders, too, have a big obligation, particularly those of the Catholic Church. And we — as farmers and throughout farmers' organisations — have an obligation we cannot push onto anyone else. We cannot say it is a government problem. It is our problem. **AND WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?**

There are already steps under way through professional organisations in Australia to get more research that is applicable in Australia as well as overseas.

Australia is the leader in many fields of pastoral research. We know more of pastures in temperate climates than anyone else; climatic conditions in South America are very similar to ours, and we have a great deal to teach there. In the field of tropical pastures, the CSIRO in Queensland are also world leaders, and we have a lot of research information that can be used. In many cases, the information already exists in some part of the world — it is just not applied because of these sociological and psychological barriers.

In conclusion I would quote from the Pope's latest Encyclical

"If the role of the Hierarchy is to teach and to interpret authentically the norms of morality to be followed in this matter, it belongs to the layman without waiting passively for orders and directions, to take the initiative freely and to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs laws and structure of the community in which they live."

One of the happiest circumstances with the Rural Movement is that we have always had from our Bishop the encouragement to do this work; and in conclusion I would like to express our appreciation of that encouragement, and the lead he has given us in all these matters.



Bishop Warren and Bishop Henschke with N.C.R.M. officials

The Development of Underdeveloped Nations

Perspective of the work of the N.C.R.M

By PAUL WILD, National Secretary, N.C.R.M.

Nowadays we Australians are constantly being reminded that "geographically we are part of Asia". We don't understand Asians, nor can we ever hope to do so completely, and from what we hear about the appalling problems of the underdeveloped nations of Asia, we are perhaps not quite sure that we want to!

We hear of dire poverty, of numerous deaths due to hunger, of disease and illiteracy, over-population — problems which are all so obvious even to the casual observer. I do not propose to give you statistics, but I will try to give some impressions from my experiences in the Philippines early this year.

I saw poverty in the Philippines and that is not the worst area in Asia by any means. Most of us have young children. Try to imagine your own four-, or six-, or eight-year-old, along with ten or a dozen others, clamouring around a tourist with the cry: "Money, mister? Money, mister?" I found it most embarrassing, and I thought it terribly degrading for the children. Then I discovered that many of these children had not even homes, and were sleeping in the streets, while others begged to supplement their parents' income. Can you imagine your children begging in the streets of Wagga or of Horsham to supplement your income?

Try to imagine your bright-eyed ten-year-old selling cigarettes on the street. I travelled by bus in several country areas of the Philippines, and every time the bus stopped, great crowds — many of them youngsters — ran up to sell their fruit, or confections, or cigarettes. The cigarette-sellers caught my attention because they were prepared even to break open a packet and sell one cigarette. A cigar cost me one cent in Manila, so what profit could there be in one cigarette? What kind of income would need supplementing like that?

So much that we take for granted is just not available to most Asians — I don't mean the obvious things like refrigerators and washing-machines. For instance, can you imagine what it would be like if you didn't know what your product was bringing in the next State? They do not have market reports in the Philippines. The local traders are often the only people who know anything about prices outside the area; they buy from the rice-grower for as little as possible and sell for as much as possible.

The Wheat Board may be criticised for some of its activities, but at least the Australian wheat-grower knows he is getting his fair share of what the wheat brings. Perhaps it would be more realistic to compare the Asian rice-grower with the vegetable-grower who sends his produce to the metropolitan market. Certainly, the Australian vegetable-grower has his problems, but at least he has market reports over the radio and in the newspapers to guide him. How much worse off he would be without these!

The primitive harvesting methods I saw struck me very forcibly. The sickle and the hand-threshing were bad enough, but you can imagine how much crop you could handle if all the grain had to be spread out on the ground to dry.

I saw my share of the poverty and hopelessness, but I do not think we should be overwhelmed by the obvious. We have many misconceptions about Asia.

One thing we often hear is that it is no use sending machinery to Asian countries because they don't know how to look after it. A few hours in Manila soon drives that idea out of your head. The traffic seems at first to be absolutely chaotic, but Manila drivers are first-class. Can you imagine a metropolis the size of Melbourne and suburbs with a population of something like eight-and-a-half million? That is Greater Manila. And all this population is moved by road — no trams, no trains, just buses and jeepneys. The Filipino driver needs only half-an-inch on either side, and he puts his hand to the horn and goes through. Yet you see very few crumpled mudguards.

The Filipino makes an excellent driver. It seems to me that, in the cities at least, Filipinos are just as mechanically-minded as Australians, and though you don't see much machinery on the farms, I am sure they could handle it.

In the last issue of RURAL LIFE you read about the tenancy problems in the Philippines. Similar problems exist all over Asia, except that other countries do not have such good laws in this field as the Philippines. (If you don't get RURAL LIFE you are invited to see me later on, when I will be very happy to supply a Bank Order form!)

Despite the Land Reform laws, the old tenancy system still applies in the Philippines. Under this, a tenant pays about 50 per cent of the cost of production and receives about 45 per cent of the harvest. To finance his planting, a farmer often has to borrow at rates of interest which to us are incredible — 12 per cent seems to be the normal interest as far as I could make out, and the tenant who has no land to offer as security must pay interest rates in the vicinity of 20 per cent per month, or 240 per cent per year.

This appalling problem of social injustice seems to be common in Asia, and the Land Code of the Philippines, which could be a blueprint for all those tenancy problems, shows that Asian themselves could tackle the problem.

The difficulty of implementing the Land Reform Code is a problem of administration. Officers, equivalent to our shire secretaries and shire engineers, are needed, as well as extension officers, teachers, clerks and all those people in the lower echelon of government, to see that decisions of the government are put into effect.

Before this can be done, such basic information as the precise boundaries of each land-owner's holding is needed. There is work for an army of surveyors to find the boundaries, and for another army of clerks to put all the information into available form. When a tenant becomes a lease-holder, according to his rights under the law, he needs credit from the Land Bank, which needs not only money to lend, but a competent staff to run it.

Here is an area where external aid is pretty useless, but time will enable the Philippines and other nations to build up their internal administration. (You can judge the importance of good administrative officers by the fact that they are prime targets for Communist terrorists everywhere. The Communists know that these men are key personnel in any scheme to raise living standards.)

I have said that Asians themselves can tackle certain of their problems. If we look at the human misery and degradation of so many in Asia and try simply to offer material relief, we will come up with the wrong solution. We need to look beneath the surface. For example, the problem of illiteracy may not best be solved by our bringing Asians into our universities.

While I was in the Philippines, I met many people who had only two or three years of formal education, which left them at a great disadvantage when it came to learning new techniques. A certain minimum standard of education is necessary before a person is receptive to new ideas, and uneducated or poorly educated people have to rely on word of mouth or radio to learn improved methods since, even if they can read, their comprehension is limited.

The problem of education is closely tied to that of administration. Peter Samuel has estimated that for India to provide an effective extension service, she would need about 1,500,000 people speaking a range of about twelve different languages. Education to a reasonable standard is needed for whole populations and, before any economic take-off is possible, education of the basic personnel — the administrators — is absolutely vital.

Western education questioned

To this end, I would question the value of the education many Asians receive in Western countries. Is it suitable for their needs? Or does it, in fact, alienate them from their own countries and cultures? In the Philippines you hear a lot of talk about the "brain-drain". They complain that so many of their highly-trained graduates are being attracted to other countries — Canada, for example. (Not Australia, of course. Our White Australia Policy sees to that!)

Perhaps a greater development of existing educational facilities in Asian countries would be more useful. In Manila, Santa Thomas, a university run by Dominicans, was founded 200 years before the township of Sydney; it is older than Harvard. The Ateneo de Manila, run by the Jesuits, is much more than a university. It is a whole educational complex, training students from primary school to doctorate level.

If you have read the paper by Fr. Masterson, S. J., which I circulated earlier, you will realise that in the Xavier Agricultural College in Cagayan de Oro he is giving students so much more than a formal education: he is training them to do a job in their own environment. I am not suggesting that we should help Fr. Masterson financially: the project is much too big for the limited resources of the Rural Movement to be of much use. At the same time, he does need someone with a knowledge of the use of legumes in tropical pastures, and I have heard it said that Australia leads the world in this field.

Fr. Masterson is largely financed by outside organisations. Another example of work being done locally in the Philippines with the help of outside money is the International Rice Institute at Los Banos.

A big problem with the varieties of rice commonly used is that they tend to lodge before the rice ripens. The use of fertilisers, by increasing this tendency to lodge, can very often decrease, rather than increase, the harvest. The plant-breeders at Los Banos have come up with varieties which are shorter and stiffer in the straw, and so can take heavy applications of fertiliser without running into this problem of lodging. They talk of crops of 200 cavans per hectare with the new variety, where the average crop is about 60 cavans. They are also doing research into diseases of rice, pesticides, the breeding of resistant varieties, and all the other jobs we associate with a wheat research station in Australia.

I have stressed the problems of social justice, administration and education because I think they are quite basic to any programme of economic development. Unfortunately no amount of economic aid can solve them. Only in the field of education can economic aid have any effect and even then the effect is limited.

The record of the N.C.R.M. in aid to the refugees of Asia has been one of which we can be justly proud — the flats built in Macao to house refugees from Communist China, the donation to Inter-Church Aid to help Tibetan refugees and the donation to the Catholic Relief Organisation for the assistance of refugees in Hong Kong.

The N.C.R.M. Asian Aid program has always been in the fields of education and social justice. The present sponsoring of three Indian students to be educated at Bihar Agricultural College, by the Finley, Howlong and Horsham groups is a good case in point. The advantage of this particular effort is that, by corresponding with the student sponsored, the members of the group should gradually acquire a more intimate knowledge of the situation in India.

While I am on this point — of the gaining of knowledge of Asia and Asians — I can say that inviting Asians into your homes during vacation time can be most rewarding to you as well as to your guests.

The Chaplain and the Secretary at the Overseas Student Centre in Fitzroy tell me that the number of people who have done this a second and third time shows what happy experience this can be.

Again, there will be an opportunity for groups to meet one of the officials of the Federation of Free Farmers early in May. Alberto Encomienda will be visiting Australia from the Philippines, and he has asked me, among other things, to arrange for him to see the Rural Movement in action. I hope to arrange as many group and regional meetings as possible.

This will be a unique opportunity for group members to get a better knowledge of an organisation which is doing marvellous work in the field of social justice. Most of you have heard of the Federation of Free Farmers; we have given financial help to it and I took with me in February a typewriter, which was a gift to the Federation from the Maryborough Group.

In the Philippines, as indeed in the whole of Asia, the most depressed sector of the community is the farming sector. I mentioned earlier the problem of tenancy and high interest rates. The aim of the Land Reform Code is to rectify injustice by giving tenants the right to become lease-holders, and eventually own their own land.

The farmer's rent when he takes a lease, is set at 25 per cent of the average of the last three normal years' crops, so that he receives 75 per cent of the crop, instead of about 50 per cent under the tenancy system. After a period as a leaseholder, during which he learns to handle his own affairs and becomes mentally adjusted, the farmer is entitled to become the owner of the land, with financial help from the Government.

The law is excellent; the problem is in application. Naturally, the land-owners do not encourage their tenants to acquire the land and, knowing that few farmers have the money to hire lawyers, the land-owners make sure the cases go to court. Where this course seems unlikely to succeed, the owners will often file trumped-up charges against their tenants in order to frighten them.

The primary work of the Federation of Free Farmers has been the provision of lawyers for the tenant farmers, and giving them advice. Next they set up a fertiliser co-operative which is developing well; now there is talk of expanding this co-operative into the field of rice marketing.

I said before that economic aid cannot solve the problem of social injustice in developing countries; but financial assistance to an Asian organisation such as the Federation of Free Farmers, working within its own country to combat social injustice, can do tremendous good. I congratulate the Rural Movement, and particularly the Howlong and Axe Creek Groups, whose names are continually appearing on the list of donors, for the economic assistance offered to the developing nations of Asia.

This help must certainly have a long-range effect for good when it is used in the existing educational establishments in Asia (as in the case of the Indian scholarships) and in functioning organisations for social justice, such as the Federation of Free Farmers.

When you consider the magnitude of Asia's problems, the amount we can achieve with direct aid is very small. We can give training for a few students, and India alone needs 1,500,000 trained extension officers. Of course, I am not suggesting we should abandon the field of direct aid — although we cannot irrigate the whole farm, it is well worth while to water a few trees.

While we are watering these trees, though, let us consider what can be done to ensure irrigating the whole farm.

The title of this talk is "The Development of Under-developed Nations", and I would suggest that large-scale development can only be achieved through **international co-operation**. By direct action we can affect individuals, but where nations are involved the problem moves into the field of international affairs, and inevitably into the field of politics.

Moulding public opinion

Since we, as an organisation, cannot become involved in party politics, and since we are too small an organisation to constitute any sort of pressure group, our action will consist largely in the moulding of public opinion. Public opinion is already in favour of aid to developing countries, so our policy needs to be a more precise one. We need to be well-informed, and we need to be realistic if we are to influence public opinion to such an extent that people are prepared to make the necessary sacrifices in the way of increased taxation and the modification of tariff barriers which involvement in the problems of Asia must entail.

Perhaps it would be useful to consider what can be done before we worry about what ought to be done. It is quite useless to present a well thought out case with reams of facts if it is not related to the Australian and the international situation.

Firstly, international co-operation will be only one facet of our foreign policy. Protection of our trade and its promotion, promotion of the rule of law between nations and defensive security will all have their place.

It can be said that the object of our foreign policy is to extend to other people what we consider to be the benefits of our way of life, and obtain for ourselves such advantages as we are able to negotiate. In this sense, foreign policy is an extension of public opinion.

Secondly, international co-operation must be seen in the context of 'power politics.' All men of good will would like to see some system of world government, as recommended by Vatican II, when conflicts between nations were settled according to the rule of international law. But, while we work towards that objective, we realise that, in fact, the only way to avoid war is to convince the potential aggressor that it would be unprofitable for him to attack. In other words, we must achieve and maintain a balance of power.

The third point is that, if we are to co-operate with other countries, we must take an interest in their internal affairs, being ready, if necessary, to intervene to ensure that aid given for a specific purpose is properly applied. We hear a lot of talk about morality, of giving aid "with no strings attached" — it seems often to lead to immorality and corruption.

The fourth point I would like to make is that, in spite of our small population, Australia is by no means an insignificant nation on the world stage. We may be small compared to the American giant, but our economy puts us among the top twenty nations of the world, and our industrial output is comparable with that of India where there is a population of 400 million. So our economic power is quite significant.

Another area in which Australia has an international reputation is that of rural research. The C.S.I.R.O. is well known and respected, and current research in the field of tropical pastures is drawing international attention, interest and appreciation.

Again we may be proud of our political system even though we do not boast much about our politicians. There are not many countries in which the judiciary is free from political interference, or where the preferential system of voting exists. And there are not so many countries in which changes of government can take place without disruption, often amounting to bloodshed.

The final point to consider is the threat of Communism, particularly the Chinese brand of Communism, to international co-operation. Communist activity is directed not towards the economic advancement of an area, but towards gaining political power. The method used is that of making the legitimate grievances of the people an excuse for terrorist activity; to develop terrorist activity into a war of 'national liberation', disrupting the economy and weaken-

ing the government; and, in the political vacuum thus created, to take over the reins of government. Any policy which does not take Communist tactics into consideration is quite irrelevant.

To summarise the points I have made, the economic advancement of the underdeveloped nations of Asia depends to a large extent on international co-operation between rich and poor nations. This co-operation will be only one of the objectives of the foreign policy of any country; it must be seen in the context of power politics. Countries co-operating with one another have the right to study and criticise each other's internal affairs. Australia has something to offer. And finally, we must be prepared to join with others to contain and deter Communist aggression.

Taking all these factors into account, I feel that the Rural Movement should use all the means in its power to have the idea of a Pacific Community accepted as a practical means of solving the problems of the area.

If it were not for the threat of Communist China, perhaps we could muddle on with merely an economic approach, leaving the smaller countries of Asia to co-operate, their individual markets being too small to support the industry they need to absorb their surplus labour. Since the Communist threat does exist, we cannot afford to act on only one front. We need to create a counter-force to Communism on the military, political and economic fronts.

This is not as impossible as it might seem. We already have the beginnings of a joint military command in Vietnam, where Vietnamese, Koreans and Filipinos are fighting alongside Australians. On the political front, we had the Manila Conference and the meetings of ASPAC and A.S.A. It is not impossible to see meetings such as these developing into a Council of Ministers having regular meetings.

On the economic front we have the Asian Development Bank, and ECAFE. Then there are the various proposals for joint enterprises. For example the Malaysian Minister of Finance suggested that Australia should join Malaysia, Singapore, and perhaps the Philippines, New Zealand and Thailand, to establish a joint international shipping line. This is a proposition which would particularly appeal to Australian primary producers, who so heavily rely on export markets.

The idea of the Pacific Community was suggested, of course, by the success of the European Economic Community. After the war, the countries of Europe were threatened by Soviet Russia. Lacking any sort of unity, they could be picked off one by one. Their only real protection was the might and determination of the U.S.A.

Even with a military treaty there was still the fear that Germany would become the most powerful nation among them, and would be a threat to their security. When they achieved the E.E.C. they had a counter-balance to the power of Russia; they had an institution powerful enough to contain Germany; and they had an internal market with a population of 250 million among whom to sell products of their industry.

In Asia the position is somewhat similar. Communist China poses the threat; Japan is the powerful but, at present, friendly nation which must be contained; and very many of the smaller nations have not a sufficiently large internal market to support the industrial complex they need to provide employment for their surplus labour.

A Pacific community

I suggest that this idea of the Pacific Community could develop under three heads:

● **POLITICAL:** A Council of Ministers could develop such organisations as ASPAC. At first, they would probably meet only once a year, but as their meetings became more frequent, they would find the need of a permanent secretariat, which could develop into the Civil Service of the Community.

● **ECONOMIC:** A Commission set up to advise on the development of the whole area, to seek and apply economic aid, to develop co-operation in the setting-up of those industries which individual countries are too small to support, and eventually to evolve a preferential trading area.

We need to know more about the organisations already existing in the area, such as ASPAC and A.S.A.; what countries are involved; what are their aims; what are their possibilities and their limitations. We need to know much more about GATT, the Kennedy Round and the Asian Development Bank; we need to know about existing military treaties. All this calls for research on the part of the individual member.

When we have this knowledge, we need to discuss it. We need to convince others of the usefulness of the idea of a Pacific Community; for the things a government does are in a rough-and-ready, but nevertheless recognisable, way a reflection of public opinion. We also need to convince the primary producer organisations that their members will benefit from the formation of the Pacific Community.

We should support organisations working for co-operation in the South-East Asian region, always providing, of course, that their other aims are not contrary to our own aims and objectives.

● **MILITARY:** A collective security treaty to be drawn up to establish a joint military command.

What can we, as Rural Movement members, do to bring this about? First, we must educate ourselves. I have only been able to deal briefly with the idea of the Pacific Community. We need to know a lot more about the geography of the region; we need to know the present and potential economic situation of the region; we need to know the extent of the Communist threat, the place primary products occupy in the area, the potential markets for Australian primary products. Finally, we need to know the American attitude to the defence of the area.

Recently we held a Seminar covering these subjects, and a booklet covering them is to be published. However, we need a greater knowledge of them than can be gained from reading one book.

We should support and, where possible, initiate moves to have the racial bias removed from our migration policy.

I hope that, during the discussion period, you will suggest other means we could adopt to get this policy accepted.

One last thought: Although this talk is concerned with nations, never forget that nations are composed of people. I often detect a note of condescension when we are talking of Asians. ("We've got a duty to help these poor, illiterate people.") As the Pope has pointed out it is not Charity, but JUSTICE.

Another point: The more Asians you get to know, the more you come to realise that you have as much to gain from any association as they have. So, take every opportunity to meet and talk with them, and while you are talking don't forget that some of them have ancestors who were studying at universities like Santo Thomas 200 years before Melbourne became a village.

Inside San Isidore

(Mrs. DELMA KENNEDY)

Motorists who drive about four miles out of Wagga towards Narrandera to the Sturt Highway see a signpost: SAN ISIDORE 1 Mile"; and, looking across the valley they will see thirty homes.

Each of these homes is built on a five-acre block and most are surrounded by fruit trees and shrubs. They are built of brick and weatherboard and are just like the homes one would find anywhere in the city. All have the modern conveniences of the town — water supply, electricity, telephone and a bitumen road, all connected from Wagga.

We have services from Wagga such as bread delivery, dry-cleaning and groceries. Also, situated at San Isidore is our local post office. We have the advantage of mail delivery four days a week, and the other advantages which go with a post office.

From the homes I mentioned, the men go to all types of employment in Wagga. Many of them are employed in the building trade. I find among them at least one bricklayer, electrician, welder, plumber and carpenter. I think about five or six of the men run their own businesses in Wagga, or around the country area. Also, we have several clerks and a number who are Government employed — such as a meat inspector, a soil tester and several teachers.

The children at San Isidore are singularly blessed. They have plenty of wide open spaces to play in; they ride horses and bikes; they can all milk a cow; and they always find plenty to do — even if it is only "yabbing" in the dam.

Unique school set-up

The school set-up is something unique. In actual fact, it is a State school, financed, run, and staffed by the Government. Yet, it is our own school. It belongs to the San Isidore Settlement, which built the school — a lovely, two-roomed brick building with all "mod cons."

The Education Department actually rents this school from us; so that we supply the school, get paid rent for it and have the advantages of the State system.

As well as this, the Sisters from Wagga come out two or three days a week to teach the children Christian doctrine; Fr. Duck has a Mass at 12 o'clock for the children to attend, and he trains the altar-boys.

It is, in fact, a State school, yet it is a Catholic school; but there are no school fees — so you will realise that it is unique. It is fortunate, too, in having a very active Parents and Citizens committee, which has provided a tape-recorder, two radiograms, a reading laboratory, and a host of other helpful education aids.

The children of High School age go into Wagga to the Convent or the Christian Brothers. They travel by bus run by the San Isidore settlers. There is no worry about where the children are after school; they are dropped at the door.

Madonna Group activities

The ladies at San Isidore have duties centred on the "Madonna Group," which meets once a month in private homes. Group members run the Altar Society and roster themselves for cleaning the church on Saturdays — we have no Sisters out there. They are also in charge of the "Rosary Statue," which goes from home to home.

When the Madonna Group started about six years ago, we adopted the La Grange Mission in Western Australia. We are fortunate in having a local lady (from Wagga) working there as a lay missionary; hence our adoption decision.

Six years ago, too, one of the ladies in the group read of the "Sacrificial Giving" idea in Germany, and we applied it to our group. We don't do a great deal of sacrifice — perhaps we have sausages for tea instead of steak; have junket instead of ice-cream; and perhaps the children don't go to a football match, or something like that. The money saved, we bring along to our Madonna meetings.

We use this money for the La Grange Mission, usually to obtain clothing. A couple of ladies come to town and buy a lot of material; then the ladies of the group have working-bees, taking along our sewing-machines; and sew madly — and talk for several hours.

We send over these articles of clothing — colored skirts, shorts for boys, etc. Our lay missionary takes colored slides and sends them to us, and we have a "slide-evening," at which we see the little children at the mission dressed in the clothes we made ourselves. From time to time, we have a night for the kiddies. They love to see the little black kiddies in the clothes Mum helped to make, and for which they made the sacrifice to raise the money. We all feel that we are very much in touch with the Mission at La Grange.

We have a "Home Help Service" in our group. As soon as one of the mothers is sick, whether at home or in hospital, the group goes into action. Some go on a visit — perhaps do an hour's help a week; some who cannot do this say: "Well, I can do any ironing;" somebody else can mind the kiddies.

The lady in charge of the service knows who can do what, and whatever is done makes a big difference to whoever is sick.

The men do not have a Group, but they are called upon for working-bees such as tree-planting and helping with the cattle. They have built two tennis courts which are a great asset to all at the Settlement. They also run socials for us now and then . . . We have a Rural Youth Group, which has a very talented debating team which is doing well indeed. So, you can see that the men are kept busy, too.

Organisation of the Settlement

The organisation and running of San Isidore are carried out by His Lordship, Bishop Henschke, Rev. Fr. Duck, and a Board of seven directors, five of whom live at San Isidore — including the Secretary. He attends to any business that may arise.

Most of the people at San Isidore have at least one cow, some fowls, etc. to supplement their income. We feel it is a great asset for kiddies growing up to look after these things, even if it is only a cow, a turkey, or a plot of tomato plants.

One of the best things about San Isidore is that we have Fr. Duck as our Parish Priest. He has now arranged Mass times so that everyone can attend at least one week day Mass a week; the mid-day Mass on Wednesday is always for the mothers and the children; we also have Mass two or three mornings a week, and on Friday evening at six o'clock, making possible the attendance of men who go to work, and for some of the children who go to school in Wagga and cannot get to Mass otherwise.

The best of two worlds

I would like to conclude on a personal note. My husband and I have lived at San Isidore for eight years now, and with a growing family we feel that there we have the best of two worlds. Of course, wherever you go will realise that some things are not 100 per cent; but we realise that, living close to a city like Wagga, we have the advantages of city life — everything but a university and the surf!

Then, you need just go over the hill to the valley and you have all the advantages of the country for the children and the adults.

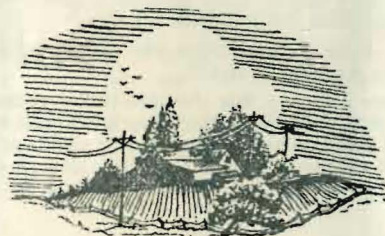
My little five-year old girl walks a few hundred yards to the unique set-up of the school; comes home to dinner and after school — and I can see her almost all the way.

My brother, who lives five miles out of a country town, has to put his little boy, who is the same age as my little girl, on a bus early in the morning to go to school.

After school, the little boy travels around for about an hour-and-a-half on the bus before he can get home. Yet he is the same distance from Lockhart as we are from Wagga.

My sister, who lives in the city, has four kiddies; and she has to put her little boy — and the other children — into the car in the morning, and take him over the busy roads to his school. Then she must go back in the afternoon to pick him up. So, you see why I have the best of two worlds — in fact it is better than either one world or the other.

Finally, I would like to thank His Lordship, Bishop Henschke and those N.C.R.M. members who, back in the earlier days had their vision of San Isidore.



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RURAL MOVEMENT IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

(Mr. GEOFF POTTER, South Wagga Group)

I'm afraid my talk will be somewhat different from the other talks. We are not going to worry particularly about whether our spiritual body and soul are the same. Rather, here in Wagga we try to look after the present, and hope by looking after the present adequately that the future will look after itself.

Perhaps the South Wagga Group may be described as something like John O'Brien's fellow-pupils at the old bush school — "little rebels at the heart". But I do hope that we give the Rural Movement something to think about; that we are able to justify our existence in an urban area.

One of the slogans of the N.C.R.M. has been that "we should return Christ to the countryside". Surely, by returning Christ to the countryside, we are not viewing it as this minority of population we find existing in the rural areas of Australia. Rather, the countryside must take in our villages, our urban dwellings and, indeed, our cities if we think that the only official adult Catholic Action body in existence in Australia is the N.C.R.M.

I think it is high time this N.C.R.M. spread its roots into the urban and city areas and shared its benefits with city dwellers.

Throughout the past couple of days we have heard about the farmer being the "backbone of the nation". If that is so, our urban N.C.R.M. must surely contribute something towards the brains of the nation.

As I go on I will be referring constantly to the work of the South Wagga Group. I do this in all humility, realising that in numbers and finance we are of very lowly status. But we have achieved something. Ours is a heterogeneous group. We do have some farmers; we have clerks, members of commercial callings, technicians, private and public school teachers, members of the Agricultural Institute staff and — to look after us all along the line — even an undertaker. So, you see, we are able to get quite a cross-section of views at our meetings.

Cross-section of opinion

We find, too, that at meetings when we meet our friends from Mangoplah and San Isidore we are able to compare problems and the things that we have achieved. Thus, we get a cross-section of public opinion, not only from the urban areas but from the smaller villages and, indeed, from the rural areas themselves.

I feel that the success of the N.C.R.M. group in any urban area depends, first of all, on the enthusiasm of the priest: unless the priest is enthusiastic, all is lost. I think this applies not only to the N.C.R.M., but to any organisation within the Catholic Church . . . I can say that at South Wagga we are very fully blessed.

The few members we have in the South Wagga Group regard the N.C.R.M. as a way of life rather than an organisation to which they belong. I feel it is a reservoir from which we draw inspiration from our fellow-Catholics, from our chaplains and from our various speakers. We are able to take this knowledge, and we are inspired to go forward to our various meetings and organisations

throughout the City of Wagga, and to put not only the Catholic viewpoint but the viewpoint of justice. We go forth to work for the welfare of our neighbors in this city, in this State, in this Nation and, indeed, in the world.

As a matter of fact, we get a little bit away from the spiritual body and soul; we take a very phlegmatic approach, and we try to get down to earth with everything we do, whether it be the Gospel Discussion or whatever it might be. We try to bring it back to our own lives, to our own organisation and see just how it will apply. We certainly have been able to extend our education through the N.C.R.M. programs, some of which have been very good and some of which did not meet with our approval — speaking frankly.

It was very interesting to hear at our own group meetings that politics cannot be brought into the N.C.R.M.; but we were able to get statements and opinions from members of all political parties in Wagga. At times you needed a sense of humour as Chairman to keep them on an even keel, but I feel we all gained by hearing the other fellow's point of view.

We do not look upon our achievements from the point of view of 12 months; sometimes at the end of 12 months we feel we have achieved nothing; but I am looking back now over nine years — almost a decade.

Formation of Credit Union

During those nine years, because of constant discussion and education, we have had the formation of the South Wagga Catholic Parish Credit Union, which has filled a crying want in our community. People are now able to live their Christian principles, to meet their moral and financial obligations; they have found strength from unity.

From a very humble beginning, within the space of a couple of years this Credit Union now has a membership of something like 154 and 50 junior members, with a turnover of approximately \$16,000. We do not go in for big amounts, but we do go in to help people pay their school fees, buy school uniforms, buy that new refrigerator and get the discount.

This point could, I think, have been elaborated more this morning in the discussion on the Philippines. Co-operatives and Credit Unions look to be the obvious education needed to lower the interest rate. We all know that, if you go to the bank and want a loan of \$1 and you haven't \$100, you haven't a chance. . . . So, I do feel that the formation of the Credit Union in South Wagga has lifted the dignity of the community.

I also feel that we have done something to improve moral standards. For example, if we go back to the Wagga Show of 1964, we find that it seemed pretty immoral with some of its sideshows — in fact, one member suggested that the theme seemed to be: Are you a married man — or do you please yourself? To us, this was a pretty serious state of affairs when we had the young children of our Catholic community and the community at large attending. So we sent letters out to the Police Department, the Showmen's Guild and other organisations concerned. As a result, I feel there has been quite an improvement in the moral standard of the sideshows at our local shows.

Within the city itself, I believe we have influenced the policy of the local branch of the Teachers' Federation. We have been able to put the point of justice; we have even had the President down here, and he was not prepared to speak against aid for private schools at our own branch — mainly because of action by Catholic members.

The ecumenical spirit has spread to the PSSA right throughout our inspectorate, where we have all the children from private and public schools, primary and secondary level, competing together and playing together, thus getting to know one another. This area is almost as big as Victoria. . . . So I think we are breaking down the barriers which made it that, if a child was a Catholic, he or she could not be a State champion within these various age groups. I feel the inspiration of this might have had its birth in the South Wagga N.C.R.M. meetings.

Address by Professor Ray

We were also instrumental in bringing Professor Ray — possibly one of the ablest speakers, if not the best, I have heard in public life — to address the Catholic Men's Dinner Club. He spoke of Australia's place in the Asian orbit, and he didn't speak merely to Catholics on that particular night. We had guests from all other religious denominations, from the Chamber of Commerce, Service Clubs and other organisations throughout the city.

Even though he was a Moslem, he expounded Christian principles as ably as anyone I have heard; and he brought the Catholic viewpoint to the Catholics of Wagga and to the City of Wagga.

One thing in his address comes back to my mind. He was asked the age-old question about the Sacred Cow and the shortage of food in India, and was told that many of us were shocked and slightly disgusted at the waste.

In reply, he said that India was a very old civilisation, and it would take centuries to end such customs, adding: "If you should have a visitor from India he would be equally astounded at what exists in your own country". So we listened very carefully as he said: "In my suburb in Melbourne, the children have toys, clothes, all the things they apparently need. Yes, your children have everything — except parental love." From there, he went on: "If children lack that security, they'll find security somewhere else, whether it is a mob of hoodlums wearing leather jackets or in a mob of some kind or other." That gave us food for thought on the way we treat our children in Australia itself . . .

At parish level our members have been actively concerned with the formation of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, and certainly we were in the forefront in the movement for educational freedom in our private schools. We have been active in our Holy Name Society and hope to lend a hand with the Parish Mission.

Fine work at national level

On the national level; Within the City of Wagga we have an organisation — and it has nothing to do with the N.C.R.M. — which has adopted a Malayan city — Termeloh — as a "Sister-City". The idea was born and discussed at our N.C.R.M. meetings for two or three months before it was launched publicly. We are rather proud of the result, though publicly we do not take any credit whatsoever.

Now we have a committee working so well that recently, after a door-knock appeal through the whole city, we were able to present the Termeloh Baby Health Centre with a four-wheel drive ambulance. In addition, private and public schools throughout the city are corresponding regularly with schools in Termeloh. The children are getting first-hand knowledge about the place, the population, their problems and the way they live. Movements such as these must help to better understanding within the Asian orbit.

We have another international project which had its very first origin within our group — the Hazaribagh Project. This group of men decided they would finance something by means of the Calf Scheme, so they adopted a leper. They found that they were able to keep the leper for something like £20 per annum. They had much more money than this, so, led by Mr. Croucher, one of their members, they were able to start a clinic for the treatment of leprosy in India.

You will see from all this that we have, in our own humble way, tried to justify the existence of the N.C.R.M. in an urban area.

If you are thinking of starting such a group, you will need people who will hang on; you will need tenacity to keep it going and you may have to look back over a period of three or four years to see your efforts bear fruit.

AXE CREEK GROUP AND ASIAN AID

(Mr. W. MANNES, Campaspe (Vic.) Region)

First, I offer my congratulations to Geoff Potter for his report on the South Wagga Group. We need at this time — probably more than ever before — the help of business and professional men in the Rural Movement.

We need them because there is a great inter-dependence between business and professional men and farmers. This inter-dependence is growing; therefore, our interests are parallel. I hope in the future more emphasis will be given to this in the Rural Movement.

What I have to say about the Axe Creek Group's participation in Asian Aid will show that it was taken up for two reasons. In the Rural Movement, at the national and executive level, we saw a need to help Asian people. Then, we saw also the need to make people in our community aware of this. You can't do much about awakening people to this need if you don't do something about it yourself. That is the attitude we have taken.

We use publicity pretty widely to go hand in hand with the various small projects — cropping, for example. When we went to sow a crop we arranged for a team of voluntary workers, and made sure that the Bendigo "Advertiser" representative and BGV8 were present so that the public would know what was going on. We didn't just want to be on T.V. — we're not photogenic — but we did want to spread the idea that there were people prepared to do something to help the people of Asia.

I believe that this has borne fruit. The Apex Club, which is very strong in Bendigo, has really taken a keen interest in this work. So, too, has Rotary — which is also very strong — to a lesser extent; and the Lions Club has shown interest. I am not so conceited as to say that this is entirely through our influence; but it has helped these people because we were prepared to do these things.

I am very proud of our Group members. We haven't many active members, and the average attendance at meetings is about ten; but for these cropping projects we can round up about twenty fellows, with tractors, implements, or whatever is required. No worries at all — they are very happy to help us. They are being educated, though they don't realise it. They're doing something for Asian Aid; they are saying: "I've got to go over on Wednesday to help sow the Asian Aid crop"; or "I'm carting a load of oats for this Rural Movement crop for Asian Aid."

There is, as you can see, two sides to this — we were raising a few dollars to help the people of Asia and those organisations with which we have contact; and we were helping to bring other people in.

The year before last, a young Catholic man from Bendigo went over to India with Community Aid Abroad. While he was over there, the Mayor of Bendigo was on an overseas tour and called on him, and discussed means of helping him in his work. When the Mayor returned to Bendigo, he launched an appeal to assist this young man — Frank Hill. We had a round-table conference pretty smartly after a news item in the paper announced the appeal, and we put in a donation. Once again, this showed that we were a body of Catholic people interested in this work.

Ways of raising money

We have many and various ways of raising money. We run a few dances in the local hall — not big affairs, but they keep people acquainted with what is going on. Next Wednesday, Bernie and I have an appointment with about eight other fellows to cut a couple of loads of wood to sell to go towards our Asian Aid — we're not doing so well this year."

★ ★ ★

In answer to questions, Mr. Mannes gave more information on the Axe Creek projects:

We find that it is a difficult thing to pin-point projects — you have to take what is offering.

About two years ago, a chap rang me one night and said: "We have 100 acres you could use. At one stage, the Rural Movement used to sow crops and leave the sown pasture after taking the grain proceeds. It's still a going concern." I told him I agreed, but hadn't thought of it before; and then asked him his proposition.

One hundred acres was a bit too much for us — I couldn't tie it in with other work. We took half of it, and I tried to talk the landowner into making it a two-year project. He wouldn't play; so we took what we could handle. We got a share-farmer to do the other part, and he cropped it on shares for us. That was a pretty good project. It returned us \$300—\$400 — it might have been a little more, but I can't remember the exact figure.

Last year, another fellow had a small paddock, on which there was a crop of barley. It didn't go so well, but I think it netted us about \$200.

As I said before, we have been running dances in the local hall. The last one — on New Year's Eve — netted us about \$70.

We just have to take the opportunities where they present themselves. All this is good exercise for Group members. That reminds me of a point I wanted to mention: I have found in something like 20 years in the Rural Movement that, for an active group, education and inspiration are vital; but you must also have accompanying action, especially with younger members.

I am proud and happy to see so many younger members here today. They are the people we must foster and encourage; but to hold and maintain their interest, you do need action. Asian Aid is an outlet for this work.

Up to this stage, we have not adopted any particular aid project. Most of what we have raised has gone to the general Asian Aid Fund in the Rural Movement. We hope soon to make some arrangement about the adding machine Fr. Markey spoke of. That is the type of thing we are doing.



Asian Students' Centre

(Miss Beulah Carter)

I am going to speak about students from Asia, Africa and the Pacific Islands who are studying in Australia, and the best way to begin is by giving you a few statistics to get the picture in its proper perspective.

Altogether there are about 12,000 such students in Australia. This number has gradually worked up to a peak in the past couple of years; and I do not think that it will increase; it will remain static for some years and then gradually taper off.

Of the 12,000 students there are roughly 4000 in N.S.W. and 4000 in Victoria; there are students in every other capital city, in Canberra, and at the New England University at Armidale.

There are three categories of these — a certain number of observers, such as journalists and doctors; trainees who are specialising; but the greater number for whom we are responsible are young secondary and tertiary education students. Of these, contrary to public opinion, about 90 per cent are private students, and only 10 per cent are here under the Colombo Plan or other Fellowships. About 10 per cent of all students are Catholics, but there are many others who have gone to Catholic schools — because they are largely the only schools in their country, or certainly the schools with the most prestige.

The students undertake a variety of courses; and more and more are coming here to get their secondary education, because in certain faculties — medicine particularly in Melbourne — it is essential to matriculate in Australia. In fact, it is very wise because the environment, methods of teaching and Australian accent are things they must get used to. The Immigration Department doesn't worry much if they pass or fail in their first year — they will have ample opportunity to repeat the year and sit for Matriculation again.

Students have many problems

They have many problems. They need to be met on arrival and have suitable accommodation found for them, which is very hard. They also come from much more disciplined families than we have in Australia; and, in fact, it is very difficult for them to discipline themselves; in most cases they are young teenagers about two years younger than the same group in Australia.

There are, of course, difficulties of food, homesickness, emotional problems and so on they come up against. There are other people interested in them — Leftists and Communists, for example.

Of the 10 per cent who are Catholics, I think it would be safe to say that the great majority are first-generation Catholics. Some have been baptised before they came here; but they don't realise the importance of Confirmation and have not received it. In actual fact, what this means is that these young people in their teens are coming here one generation removed from paganism; and it is terribly important that this Faith they have newly acquired be properly nurtured — you can't put an orchid out in the middle of a paddock when it has been growing in a hot-house.

It was for this reason that the Overseas Students' Centre was established about six years ago; twelve years prior to that, a full-time Chaplain had been appointed. There is a full-time Chaplain now, and I am full-time Secretary of the Centre. The full-time chaplain is a Columban Father. The Centre is a two-storey building in which we have various sorts of activities, the chief one being to help those who have the Faith to hold it.

A unique missionary experience

In actual fact, what it all amounts to is a unique mission experience for Australia. We have missionaries, particularly Australian Redemptorists, in Malaya, Singapore and other places. They spend a lifetime educating these young people and converting them; but when those students come here many of them lose the Faith — in fact, a couple of years ago it was estimated that roughly 50 per cent of the Catholics who came here lost the Faith. That means that the efforts of our Australian missionaries, who are spending a lifetime "sweating it out" up there are largely dissipated. So it is that the main purpose of the Centre is to hold the Faith of those who have it.

There are others who are potential Catholics. Having gone to Catholic schools for many years they know as much about our religion, in many cases, as you or I when we left school. There are people under instruction all the time.

We provide cultural and social activities geared to bring the students into the Catholic environment; we also try to provide hospitality among Catholic families.

You must realise that these people come from a free society, and you can't tell anyone from an undeveloped country what they have to study — I mention this because of a reference this morning to overseas students not getting quite the right type of education. Those who come here under the Colombo Plan are studying or training in courses that are directly related to their countries' needs. There are many others who come out here to study Accountancy. They are from small country towns, and they cannot all be absorbed back in their own area.

We try to give the students a sense of mission or a sense of vocation, so that when they return to their countries they won't go back thinking of the best job at the highest money they can get in Kuala Lumpur, but wanting to do something to help their fellow-Asians.



N.C.R.M. members visit the Asian Students' Centre

We also think it important to try to make sure that the students will not be too Westernised when they go back. The longer they spend away from home the more they are looked upon with suspicion because of the nationalism we find in Asia today.

There have been several outstanding examples of students we have known who had no apostolic thought at all. They have attended one of our meetings or conventions, and that, in a sense, opened their eyes to a new world — the possibility of apostolic work when they returned home, of something they can do to help their fellow-Asians.

There was the case of the Hong Kong girl who came out here to do nursing. She returned there and got a job in a hospital, and she goes on one of her days off to help an American doctor, who is also a Methodist minister, and has a hospital on a junk for poor people. It is quite extraordinary for an educated Asian to go back and give up time like that; nevertheless, this girl did it.

In Malaya, others in the academic field have started an organisation to try to do something for fellow-students. Another who came in contact with our ideas here — he is in the University of Malaysia — was not long ago one of four delegates on a special sub-committee to the United Nations.

Seeing our way of life

Another aspect of our work is to try and show Asians something of the Australian way of life — apart from what they learn at the University. You get different degrees of effectiveness when you are dealing with human beings. Some say quite frankly: "We are very lucky to go overseas and study because we can see other people's way of life. There's so much more than just doing our course."

We try to introduce them to people in their professions — someone to whom they can speak of their problems, and from whom they can get opinions of the different fields in which they are working.

As far as hospitality is concerned, the aim is to bring the students into an Australian home — to see something of the Catholic life in a home. This is particularly relevant in the country, where students should stay in a Catholic home while on a holiday. We feel strongly that the Catholic student, particularly in the first couple of years here, should have the opportunity of spending some time in a Catholic home in the country and so get some idea of Catholic life here.

I don't think this is even charity; I think these students are visitors to our country, and we ought to invite them into our homes simply because we are the host nation and they are the visitors.

I remember hearing of a boy who was doing a course in Architecture. He was almost finished his course — which means he must have been nearly seven years here — when someone invited him to a city home for dinner.

He and the other student guests did something they would like to do — the people of the house let them cook a meal for themselves; then they had a sing-song around the piano. The lady of the house made some comment after, and this student said: "This is the first time I have ever been invited home by an Australian family."

He was going home in about six months, and it would have been very unfortunate had he gone back to Singapore and someone asked what Australian homes are like. His reply would have been: "I've never been invited into one."

The advantage of this to the student is that it helps to broaden their knowledge. I'll quote one instance for you. For the past couple of years the Catholic community of Myrtleford have invited a busload of students to go up there and stay with the families. On the Saturday, they go up to the snow; next day they spend seeing the local sights. One student from a small town in Malaya was completely surprised when he walked into the presbytery and found carpets on the

floors, television and a refrigerator. He thought it was impossible to have carpets on the floor the same as in the city! That is quite a different concept of life from what we are used to — they know Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, and apart from that, the rest is the country.

N.C.R.M. members as hosts

If the students do get the chance to go to the country they see something of the Australian way of life. In this regard, I would like to thank Mr. Mike Howley, Mr. Bill Mannes and Mr. Kevin Fitzgibbon, and Mr. Charles Bignold, all of whom have had Asian students in their area. They have come back with glowing reports of the hospitality. It really is surprising and very interesting the little things that interest them — which are quite extraordinary to them but which we take for granted in our Australian way of life.

There is another aspect of these visits. We have had many reports from those who have had students staying with them, and it is doubtful whether the students or the hosts have benefited most.

I think people are a bit wary in the first place. They say: "We have never spoken to Asians and we wouldn't know what to say." But families who have had these students as their guests have benefited very much from having them. They find out first-hand something of their way of life, and this puts it on a more personal level than dealing with the big problems of Asian countries. Not that the students would be technically equipped to answer all questions on their countries' problems, but they can tell you a lot if you are prepared to ask questions.

After the last National Executive meeting, some of the delegates who attended came along to the Centre. They spent a happy and informal time with some of the students — joining in a sing-song or just talking to them.

We arrange serious talks and hold an Annual Convention. As I said before, we try to give this sense of "missionary vocation" to the students; we have social functions to which we invite Australians. The students do not like to have all things Asian; they like to have Australians come along to as many functions as possible.

Trying for an independent footing

The building for the Centre is provided by the Church authorities in Melbourne. The Chaplain is a Columban Father who pays my wages. We are trying to get the work on an independent footing. The situation now is that if the Columban Fathers withdraw from the work I'm out of a job — I don't know who would pay another secretary if they came in! It is the policy of the Columban Fathers — as I suppose it is of missionaries everywhere — to put local undertakings as much as possible on an independent footing.

We have an Australian committee which runs functions at the Centre — we are having a big Oriental concert soon, and the students will be contributing items. At such functions as these we have an Eastern Bazaar every year, selling quite a lot of Eastern goods and plenty of Asian foods the students themselves cook. These help to cover running expenses and contribute a little towards getting on an independent footing.

Finally, we have long-range plans for a hostel — at the moment we have no one living on the premises. That is another thing: There are ample facilities for university students, but virtually nothing for technical students. We are trying to get a hostel in which something can be done to help these boys in this way.

The Sacraments and The Apostolate

(Rev. G. IVERSON, D.D., Wagga)

I feel that the subject of this talk — "The Sacraments and the Apostolate" — is an important one simply because the Council in the Church today stresses so much the role of the liturgy in our life.

You need only recall the idea of Vatican II that the liturgy is the summit to which the activity of the Church is directed. At the same time, it is the fountain from which all her power flows. If the Church can say all this about the liturgy in general, how much more does it apply to the sacraments.

They are the very kernels, the very core of liturgical worship of God; hence, they must be at the very foundation of our spiritual life if we are to be effective apostles. Therefore, we must try to see in the sacraments the full wonderful reality that God has planted there if they are to have an effect on our personal life and if they are to be a constant drive, inspiration and strength for our personal and social apostolate.

Yet, surely we have felt — as I have certainly felt at times — that the sacraments tend to become routine things — something we do, and yet they do not seem to have the effect that we anticipate, or think they would have, judging by various devotional writings.

The sacraments are not things we keep on going to, and where we are storing up above a treasure of grace that will one day reap its reward — and the more often we go automatically does this treasure of grace increase. It is certainly true and defined by the Church that the sacraments do work automatically — true to a certain extent, but do not press this too far.

It is not true, all other things being equal, that the more often we go to the sacraments the holier we become, because the sacraments are not magical things. We must steer a middle course between making them magic and seeing them purely as our own personal prayer towards God. The truth lies in between these extremes; but to get at the truth we might have to go back a little in our facts.

What does grace do for us? We ask because this is central to the whole idea of the sacraments. Unless we understand the wonderful reality of grace the sacraments will not have the appeal and the effect in our spiritual life or in our apostolate that God desires them to have.

The first thing about grace is that it is not primarily a thing. Grace is a person or, more strictly, three Persons — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, coming to dwell with us. Grace, as some theologians would express it, is the encounter, the meeting place between God and man where we come together and God brings us into a union with Himself.

The accent over the last few hundred years in theology has certainly been on the creative, sanctifying grace God places in our souls. We have seen so often that this is God's life which He shares with us. But do not overlook something even more fundamental than that — that the first thing God does is to come to us Himself to dwell with us personally; and, since He is there, He shares with us the life we call "Sanctifying Grace".

We should stress more than we do, perhaps, the idea of grace being first and foremost a meeting with God that anticipates the full and perfect meeting we will

have with God in Heaven. Our Lord said: "If any man loves Me he will keep My Word, and the Father will love him. We will come to him and We will make Our home with him."

They are the key words giving us the understanding of what grace really means.

Grace, then, is the presence of God to us — not just the physical presence of two persons in a room. Two delegates who have not met before can be present at this conference. They are present in a physical sense; they do not know one another; there is no bond between them, perhaps, until they meet, talk and discover one another as persons. Then there can be a union of interest, knowledge, affection and a common ideal. They become present in a different sense — personally present to one another.

The meaning of grace

Grace means that we and God become present one to the other in a personal union of knowledge and love; and this is the foundation on which God can share His life in our souls and make us live the Divine life.

It is true that God's plan of redemption, going right back to Abraham, is in some sense a sacramental plan. I am not talking of the "Seven Sacraments" the Church speaks of now, but extending the term a little as it was done in the early Church and as it is done now.

"Sacraments", or the idea of a sacrament, here means God coming to meet us in and through something that is visible — something we can feel, touch and hear. It means God respecting our human nature, body and soul, and making His approach, calling us to this meeting, this encounter via physical things.

God has always done this to the extent that the pagan religions could lead a man to the knowledge of God. They were channels of grace through the actual sacrifices and the ceremonies they were filled with — leaving aside, of course, all the errors and superstitions that were so often combined with this genuine sense of God in them.

In Israel, before the coming of Christ, God still acted through the ceremonies, the visible priesthood, the sacrifices that made Israel His own people; these, the channels of grace, imperfect and shadowy but yet anticipating the coming of Christ.

Now, when Christ comes here, we have God's sacramental plan for us. . . . In Him, the two halves to this encounter — mankind and God — come together, not just because Christ has two natures, a human and a divine, but because in Our Lord's life in all His actions God is meeting men perfectly and completely.

If you look at it in this way, perhaps it might help: In all Our Lord's actions, His working among the people, His talking to them, His miracles, God was revealing Himself — His life, His compassion, His interest in other people, His service through the actual physical actions of Our Divine Lord.

When He met Mary Magdalene, Mary could see from the loving forgiveness of Christ the love and mercy of God made visible for her. All Our Lord's actions reveal in human form the actions of His human nature; they reveal the infinite spiritual love of God in a way that we can perceive, see and hear. That is why Christ is called the "Sacrament".

That is one half of the encounter — God coming down to us through the actions of Christ. The other half of the encounter is our surrendering ourselves to God. Again, in Christ this half of the encounter becomes visible and perfect in the love of Our Divine Lord, because we know it is a fundamental thing about the love of Christ that all His actions gave praise, adoration and glory to God from the very moment of His existence. There was never a moment when Christ was not doing the will of His Father, when He was not surrendering Himself in a life that only in Christ was fully lived in praise and adoration of God.

Not for Himself alone

Christ was not doing this for Himself alone. He was doing this as the second Adam, the new head of humanity. On our behalf in His human life, we — mankind in general — offered a perfect life lived in honour, adoration and praise of God the Father. So we have two halves, both perfect and both meeting in the life of Christ — God manifesting, revealing, showing in visible form His love for us, and Christ taking our prayer, adoration, love and sacrifice towards God — taking that into His life and offering that fully and completely in all His actions to the Heavenly Father.

This reaches a climax in the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Our Lord, where He personally, body and soul, passes from this life to a complete and glorified union with God in Heaven. There, on the Cross, we see fully revealed more than in any other moment in Christ's life the love, the adoration — the love of God towards us, the adoration of man towards God.

Since Our Lord has ascended to the Father, the Church becomes for us the sacrament where Christ comes into our midst and lives His life in us. The basic idea behind the whole life of the Church is that we are the Body of Christ; that Christ continues to live in our life the life that He lived in the land of Palestine 2,000 years ago. We in the Church — Pope, Bishops, Priests and Laity — are meant to form this one Body of Christ, this right hand of the Father, Lord of Creation.

The sacraments — each and all of them — become moments in our life when we come face to face with the loving humanity of Christ, glorified now at the right hand of God.

The sacraments are not just things we do, actions we perform. That is just the surface. Underneath the actions of the Church, the words the priests use, the words you use in the Sacrament of Marriage when you confer the sacrament on one another, Christ is present. It is a sacrament because the thing you can see contains the Living Person of Christ, acting now in our life to make it a reflection and radiation of His living presence in Heaven.

I will apply a few of these points to the sacraments of Marriage and Confession — the first because it is a sacrament that most of you will follow or are following, and it is the pathway to holiness that God has called you towards. I will speak of Penance because it is a sacrament that we use so often. I think there is, perhaps, greater need here to see beyond the actual words of the priest, to the presence of Christ Himself.

The other sacraments are, of course, important; but, because time is short, let us look at the two named and see how trying to see a sacrament as an encounter with Christ will help us to a deeper appreciation of what these sacraments mean.

An encounter with Christ

The fact that marriage is a sacrament means a great deal more than Our Lord adding His grace to something that was originally holy and sacred. It means far more than just tacking on sanctifying grace to what was formerly a human contract — something good and wholesome. It means, basically, the encounter of man with Christ through the love that two people have for one another. With the faithfulness, fidelity, love and unselfishness that marriage needs, these two people will find God.

Even before the coming of Christ marriage was something sacred and holy. We have heard this often. It was holy and sacred because it was the most perfect meeting on earth between two human persons; it was the encounter between two human beings which, more than any other, could uplift and develop their lives towards God.

Perhaps it is no exaggeration to say that, right on the first page of the Old Testament, in Genesis when the author describes the creation of mankind, after the creation of animals he finds God hesitating, so to speak: "Let us make man in our own image and likeness." Three times the idea is repeated in the next verse. . . God makes us in His image and likeness and then he immediately adds: "He made them male and female", as though to say that, by the difference of sexes, the design to lead men and women towards marriage and to the experience of marriage comes most to resemble the life, love and knowledge that has always taken place in God. Through meeting one another, they come to meet God.

That has been true of marriage right from the beginning. How much is it truer of marriage now when Christ makes it a sacrament! And what does He do to make it a sacrament? He takes this wonderful reality, this meeting between two persons, and makes it a visible sign for the world to see of His love for His Church and of His Church's union with Him.

Your marriage, then, is meant to be a sacrament. It is not just a ceremony you go through at the altar in a church on your wedding day; rather, it is a sacrament because, throughout your married life, your knowledge and love of one another is meant by Christ to be something that will draw you and uplift you into becoming a more perfect expression to the world — a more perfect mirror, a more perfect reflection — of the love of Christ towards us and of our love towards Him.

You have heard it said of the family: "It is the Church in miniature." That is quite true, because here in family life through the presence of Christ in your married lives you come over the years to experiences of husband and wife with one another and with their children in which they find a richer and deeper knowledge and love, and so make their married life a more perfect reflection to the world of what love and knowledge really are and, particularly, of what Christ's love for us might be.

A profound mystery

Marriage is a profound mystery because in two human lives that have come into contact we can see, learn and appreciate that, in this marriage, God wants to shine forth to the world something visible and tangible of His love towards us and our love towards Him. It is meant to be a reflection of the encounter between Christ and us.

Remember, for your own spiritual development, that the more your marriage achieves this goal of unselfish love and self-giving the more perfectly you fulfil your vocation in holiness. Christ is interested not in just guarding your marriage against evil; rather, your pathway to holiness is by developing to the full that unselfish ability to give of yourself to your partner in marriage, to give of yourself to your children the fruit of your love.

The more you do that the more perfectly you are not just carrying out a law of charity, but the more perfectly you are living your vocation to be visible beacons in this modern world of Christ's love for His Church; the more you are living your vocation to be "Sacraments of God".

Turning to the Sacrament of Penance: If we see in Confession only a forgiveness of sins that comes to us through the words of the priest; if we see only the priest; if we do not look behind him and see the Living Presence of Christ, we fail to appreciate what Confession really means.

Confession is a continuation of what Christ did during His own life. When Mary Magdalene met Christ — when she came into His presence with her love — her sorrow expressed itself in the washing of His feet and the drying of them with her hair, so much did He reflect for her the love, mercy and forgiveness of God.

Peter, during Christ's trial, having denied Him three times, Christ turns and looks on. That personal contact with Christ was the thing that for Peter changed the course of his life or, at least, changed his previous condition and brought him back to a full realisation of what sin had meant.

Confession not "just a ritual"

Likewise, for us Confession is not just a ritual we go through. It is coming face to face with the Living Person of Christ — a meeting of two persons, a showing of that love and mercy and forgiveness that characterised all Our Lord's actions on earth. We come to meet that same living Christ, just as ready to forgive us our sins and to receive us and welcome us back into His mercy and love in Confession. Only He does it now in a way we cannot see immediately. He does it through the veils of the sacrament, through the visible, tangible words of forgiveness of the priest and our visible expression of sorrow.

Perhaps it may help us to see one important point — the distinction between Contrition and Confession. It may help us to clear up in our minds, too, the exaggerated idea of the importance of Confession and the corresponding lessening of the importance of Contrition that I feel many Catholics still have.

If we see Confession as something almost magical, it makes less demand on us; if we see it as an easy way of forgiving sin rather than contrition, again it becomes a distortion of God's plan.

Confession is meant to be the summit of the whole process of forgiveness, a summit that reaches its peak when we come personally to meet Christ. The Prodigal Son, in the parable, spent his youth in squandering his money, etc., and then came to a realisation that only in his father's house could he find real happiness — only by the humility of returning again to his father. So he set out for home, and when his father saw him he ran to meet his son and embraced him. In that embrace — the forgiving father and the sorrowing son — we have the perfect image of Confession.

Confession can spread its power — or, rather, Christ can spread the power of sacramental grace — to draw us through the various stages of contrition to the actual reception of the sacrament itself. All the grace that comes through the forgiveness of sins comes to us through our Confession, but not immediately then. It can come days or months before, leading us little by little to the high point of this whole process of forgiveness — our encounter with Christ in the sacrament.

Time has run out, so we will leave it at that, only adding that the sacraments must never degenerate in our spiritual life to rituals that are empty and without meaning, because they contain the most wonderful and deepest reality of our whole faith. They are the moments when we can most perfectly come into immediate contact with Christ — a contact which is not visible as that of Thomas was when he saw Christ after His resurrection, but a contact no less real for that. It is a contact which comes through visible words, signs, actions, water, wine, oil, etc. — visible signs that make present God's presence and action in us.

They are meant to be not just help to get us to Heaven; rather, they are meant to be the anticipation of Heaven. They are meant to be a meeting and an encounter that will draw us ever more deeply into a union of love with Christ, with God the Father, that will find and reach its full perfection only in our full and perfect life with God in Heaven.

AUSTRALIA'S ENCOUNTER WITH ASIA

Public Address, Civic Theatre, Wagga

(By B. A. SANTAMARIA, M.A., LL.B.)

The essential message of the Vatican Council to the laity of the world was that it was the responsibility of the laity to make effective the presence of the Church in the world of temporal affairs — international affairs, political situations, the under-developed world, the media of public communications — the whole of the temporal world.

If I may say so with respect to the decisions of a great Council, that particular doctrine was not new to the Rural Movement. It ratified the practice of the Rural Movement over 25 years ago. But it is not a new doctrine.

In fact, the Rural Movement has always resolutely refused to become a pious association, or a sodality, or a movement of formation. It has insisted on its right to formulate detailed policies which relate to agriculture. It has insisted on its right to influence public policy, through the activity of its members in public organisations.

Some people may call this approach political. If it is political, it is so only in the sense in which Pius XI defined politics as 'after the priesthood, the field of the widest charity of all'.

Vatican II merely ratified what we learnt from Pius XI and Pius XII. We have refused to apologise for our alignment. We are not likely to change.

That is my justification for speaking to you on this question tonight.

A.

The thesis I would like to put forward is that the revolutionary turmoil of Asia in general and South-East Asia in particular gives rise to certain factual realities; and that, by and large, Australian attitudes have not caught up with them. If this is true, it is important, since public attitudes prescribe the limits beyond which foreign and defence policy cannot range.

To see these realities in their true perspective, I would like to project our vision tonight into the middle of the next decade. To those who say that this way of doing things is visionary and unreal, I would merely reply that 1975 is eight years from now. Whether we succeed or fail in our encounter with South-East Asia will depend on many factors other than our defence and foreign policies; but these will largely determine the result. As every practical person knows, particularly in this field, it takes fully a decade for plans put into operation to emerge as things achieved.

The things which are being done effectively today are those which were planned ten years ago. The things which are planned today will not mature until ten years have passed. Our approach today will determine our factual position ten years hence.

The two situations

As I see it, in essence all of the small nations of South-East Asia — Australia included — face two situations: a 'maximum situation' and a 'minimum situation'. Both 'maximum' and 'minimum' situations revolve around the future policy of

Communist China, which must be seen against the still unresolved power struggle in Indonesia, the uncertainty of the issue in South Vietnam, and the response which China's policy will ultimately evoke from Japan.

There are those who say that China's present internal turmoil means that she won't be a factor at all. To this I would reply that we know very little about what is going on.

That is why I think it is commonsense to go along with the judgment of the London 'Economist' which, last August, dismissed the hopes of those who believed that the harsh policy of Lin Piao had merely been stated for internal propaganda, or, alternately, that the internal struggle would prevent China from carrying out any effective policy at all. The 'Economist's' conclusion was eminently reasonable:

"There is nothing wrong", the 'Economist' said, "with hoping that the worst will not happen. But it is not a basis of policy. Until and unless there is solid evidence that China does not intend to do what Lin Piao says it wants to do, or cannot do, the only safe assumption for the Americans or anybody else to make is that the Chinese mean every word they say. That is where any safe Asia policy starts from."

President Kennedy said it more simply when he said that wise statesmanship hoped for the best, but prepared for the worst.

Problems define themselves

If I may take this approach, then the two problems largely define themselves.

- The 'maximum' problem derives simply from the fact that Communist China has acquired the mastery of nuclear weapons.

- The 'minimum' problem derives from the existence and almost inevitable spread of what I may call 'breakdown situations' throughout South-East Asia.

If I may speak briefly of the 'maximum problem', it is well to recall that last year China exploded her fourth and fifth nuclear devices. The fourth was at the end of a ballistic missile, indicating that China was developing the means of delivery of its nuclear weapons. The fifth contained thermo-nuclear material. This marks a most important advance in the whole field of nuclear technology.

There is no reliable evidence whatsoever to indicate that the internal turmoil has interrupted China's nuclear program; there is some evidence that it has not. Whichever side wins in China will have nuclear weapons at its disposal.



(L. to r.): Mr. P. Wild, Mr. T. Fromholtz, Mr. B. A. Santamaria, Mr. M. Howley

What is China's nuclear equipment today? What will it be in eight years? The Institute of Strategic Studies, which rightly puts a low rating on China's present military capacity, has proposed this estimate:

Today, China evidently has a small store of atomic weapons. Strategically, today's store is unimportant. However, within ten years, Red China will possess nuclear submarines with Polaris missiles, H-bombs, and a second-strike nuclear capacity.

The Japanese Defence Ministry has reached a similar conclusion.

Even at the end of this year, Communist China will be far short of nuclear equality with the United States. It will be far short of the power needed to risk a total nuclear 'confrontation' with the United States. And there, if we assume that its leaders will behave rationally, it is unlikely to pursue policies aiming at that total encounter.

But, assuming that China's leaders will behave rationally, we must recognise that they all have a different capacity of direct relevance to the political security of every small nation in South-East Asia.

From the moment when they acquired control of the mainland, the Chinese leaders have been wedded to one central policy — to drive American military, political and economic power out of East and South-East Asia. This policy has been consistently avowed by the Chinese leaders, and what has been consistently avowed has been practically pursued.

To this point, the Peking Government has directly and indirectly availed itself of the natural opportunities open to it — diplomacy in Burma and Cambodia, subversion in Indonesia, insurgency in Vietnam and Thailand.

With nuclear weapons she can back the same policy with the threat of nuclear blackmail. She will have the capacity, for instance, to threaten the West Coast cities of the U.S. with 'sneak' nuclear attacks as part of a continuing pressure to force the U.S. out of South-East Asia.

It would be quite unwise to under-estimate the force of this persistent pressure. If American opinion has been eroded by a long and indecisive war in Vietnam, and if the forces of isolationism in South-East Asia are once again in the ascendancy, these forces will urge a *detente* between the U.S. and China, based on pragmatic recognition of Chinese hegemony in Asia.

As I understand it, this is essentially the Lippman position; perhaps it is also Senator Fulbright's position.

The position, which must be anticipated after the Chinese leaders have acquired nuclear weapons is what I may call the 'maximum situation'. The implications are obvious and ominous.

B.

If I put this 'maximum situation' aside at the moment, it is not because it does not have to be faced. I put it aside for two reasons.

At this moment we still lack the necessary information as to what it will mean. More important, it is put aside merely because the 'minimum situation' is even **now** upon us. It must be dealt with **now**. If we are unwilling to deal with the 'minimum situation' now, it must be evident that we will not deal with the 'maximum situation' — so much more difficult — now or later.

What is the 'minimum situation' we are confronting now?

The 'minimum situation' derives from the fact that the belt of territory to our immediate north, between India and Japan, is occupied by weak and unstable States. It would be a brave prophet who would refuse to admit the possibility that, in the next few years, India itself may join the list. The machinery of these States breaks down periodically under the impact of the overwhelming problems of poverty, illiteracy and under-development.

Basic reason for breakdown

The basic reason for this breakdown is that many of these States are geographic expressions or, more accurately, European abstractions: political unities imposed by the European colonial powers on peoples with no national consciousness. In Burma there are at least four insurgencies in progress; only two are Communist, the others are predominantly Shan or Kachin or Karen.

In Thailand, there are millions of Lao people who have no knowledge of Thailand. The 1958 revolt against Soekarno was, to a large extent, a Sumatran rising against Javanese domination . . . Where there is no national consciousness and no militarily preponderant power, there is the natural basis of a 'breakdown'.

The reason for this 'breakdown situation' is that, almost universally, these countries lack an administrative 'cadre': there is a calamitous insufficiency of men qualified to act as province chiefs, district chiefs, doctors, dentists, engineers, road-builders, teachers. As a result, grandiose plans proclaimed at the centre fail, if for no other reason, for lack of technicians in the field.

These 'breakdown situations' often degenerate into guerrilla warfare — as they have in Burma — without Communist intervention. But a unique situation arises from the conscious use of guerrilla insurgency by the Communists as a dual-purpose weapon — to liquidate whatever technical personnel there are and substitute their power for that of existing unstable regimes.

The impact of these 'breakdown situations' already faces Australia. It is out of one of them that major political conflicts will arise in Australia, as they have arisen over our intervention in Vietnam — the classic example of this phenomenon.

Everybody is in favour of civil aid to South-East Asia; the division arises when we have to face up to the non-civil aspects of guerrilla insurgency. The most significant change which this 'minimum situation' has brought about in our national patterns of living compared to even ten years ago, is the seemingly permanent presence of Australian troops overseas — in Vietnam, Malaya and Thailand. A few years ago this would have been incredible; now it is accepted as inevitable.

Nobody will be surprised if more Australian units are ultimately stationed anywhere from India to the Philippines; for there is already talk — repeated in Singapore lately — that the Australian battalion released from Borneo may have to take up anti-guerrilla work on the border between Thailand and Malaya. There, in recent months, the Malayan-Chinese Communist chief, Chin Peng, has developed insurgency operations despite the attentions of Thai-Malay patrols.

What has happened on the border between Thailand and Malaya is not unlikely in Sarawak and Sabah. The attempt to erode the guerrilla base of the clandestine Communist organisation by means of amnesty has failed. If and when this organisation believes that the unstable political situation in these States favours guerrilla operations, there may well be a demand for Australians there.

Equally, no one can predict that the present stage of guerrilla insurgency in Thailand will not deteriorate further, and that the Thais will not thereupon call for Australian aid, as they have called for American aid.

Granted the social and political structure of the small S.E. Asian States, these situations are likely to proliferate. The British are certain to reduce their commitment; the Americans, granted Vietnam, are unlikely to carry every unwanted baby on their own. There is little doubt that Australia will be expected to carry a large part of the burden for what is, after all, more closely linked with the security of her own country than with that of the U.S.A.

Australia's popularity in the U.S. — on which the effectiveness of the American alliance will ultimately depend — will in turn be related to Australia's practical response to the challenge.

These being the 'minimum situations' we will be called upon to face, we would do well to examine what they involve in hard pragmatic fact.

C.

The two "stereotypes"

There are two viewpoints which, in my opinion, occupy about 75 per cent of the ground of public opinion in Australia. They are what, for want of a better phrase, I may call the Holt stereotype and the Cairns stereotype.

While I use the names of individuals for purposes of easy definition, I am referring in reality to the political forces which they have come to represent.

I don't know whether I do justice to the Prime Minister's total outlook when I say that at this moment it is popularly believed to be summed up in the

phrase "All the way with L.B.J.": basically, that Australia's future is bound up with the American alliance; that it stands or falls by the American alliance. This concept was strongly attacked by the Opposition during the Federal election. From the Opposition's stand I totally dissociate myself. It seems to me that any Australian Prime Minister who did less than his utmost to 'maximise' American interest in Australia would be doing much less than his duty.

My criticism of the Prime Minister's stereotype is based on different grounds. I would prefer to base this criticism on the more formal expression of his basic concept in the interview he gave on August 30 last year, on the eve of his visit to London. In this interview, he said:

"I do not think defence self-reliance will be within our grasp for many years to come." (If I may interpolate, nobody believes that it will be. The real question is whether defence self-reliance should be aimed at as a policy objective, and with all appropriate speed.)

"It is in the alliances we have — and to which we ourselves make a reasonable contribution — that our security lies. I would regard five per cent (of the national income) devoted to defence as a sort of practical working limit in the absence of some traumatic international development."

This statement is in harmony with what Mr. Holt said just before he became Prime Minister — that Australia's need to maintain a high rate of development and a high standard of living precluded her making large contributions to Britain's defence effort in South-East Asia.

The danger in proposing "our alliances" as the fundamental basis of Australia's defence is that it seems to me to be a reversion to the comfortable delusion on which we traded so long, and which, in the end, revealed its bankruptcy: that Britain would always want to help us and, more important, would always be in a position to help us.

The first delusion, which ended so dramatically in the sinking of "Repulse" and "Prince of Wales" and in the fall of Singapore, is now yielding to another delusion. This delusion is that America is so certain to come to our aid in any future danger that there is no need for us to behave as if we could find ourselves alone. If this delusion establishes itself, it could well be the last from which we will suffer.

No one can predict the future, but there are at least three conceivable situations in which, in a moment of extreme danger to Australia, the United States might be unable to help.

One is an eventual rapprochement between Chinese and Russian Communists — unlikely but far from impossible — with consequent Russian pressure on Europe. The **second** is a Chinese nuclear threat to America's West Coast as a cover for blackmail in South-East Asia. The **third** lies in the future of the movement for Negro emancipation in the United States. Who is able to predict how far the extremists of "black power" will go, and what effect their activities will have on the internal cohesion of the United States in its capacity to act effectively overseas?

Even if we think only of the 'minimum situations' to be envisaged in the next ten years, the current defence budget, while it raised defence expenditure from 3.5 per cent to 5 per cent of the Gross National Product, granted the utterly backward state of our defences, offers little prospect of meeting our likely contingencies in time. This enlarged expenditure will after all, only raise the number of Australian combat troops to something over 10,000.

As I said earlier, the United States will look to Australia to play an increasing part in the 'minimum situation'. Ten thousand troops won't stretch very far.

Mr. Holt speaks of 'traumatic experiences' of the future, as the only thing which can justify more than 5 per cent of the Gross National Product being spent on defence. What more traumatic experience does he want than that of September 30, 1965, when all that prevented the Communists taking over Indonesia with Soekarno's compliance were two misdirected bullets and a wrong address? Does he really believe that those who intend to visit 'traumatic experiences' on us will always give us ten years notice?

What Mr. Holt proposes is right — even if only partly right — in the field of foreign policy. In my view, it is the defence policy which ultimately fails — on two grounds. In the 'minimum situation' it does not provide the military forces necessary to meet the burdens which the U.S. will expect us to carry.

Thereby, it will ultimately weaken America's assessment of Australia's value as an ally and America's judgement that Australia is really essential, in a moment of real danger to this country.

Furthermore, in the situation which faced us with Britain in 1942, and which might be envisaged as a concrete possibility with the U.S., it does not provide us with the double insurance of self-reliance, should the American alliance fail.

I would, therefore, submit to you quite positively that defence self-reliance, however difficult to achieve, ought to be the essential part of Australia's pattern of policy.

E.

The Cairns stereotype can be easily defined. It expresses an important mood in Australian politics and is, therefore, not merely the personal statement of a leading political figure. The Communists have captured the 'popular movement' in Asia; it is immoral and ineffective to seek to reverse the verdict; to use military measures will earn us the hatred of Asian peoples; what remains for Australia is to find an acceptable place in a Communist-dominated South-East Asia.

In May 1966, Professor Arndt, speaking of this view, said:

"It is primarily if not wholly because, on balance, they want Communism to win in Vietnam that all the Government's most active critics, and in particular the leaders of the A.L.P. Left . . . oppose the present policy."

I have come away from one or two encounters with Dr. Cairns agreeing with Professor Arndt's estimate. I don't believe that Dr. Cairns' views on Australian policy towards South-East Asia can be understood apart from his expressed political philosophy, which includes the proposition that the Labor Party is next in the political spectrum to the Communist Party; that there is nothing morally or politically wrong in co-operating with Communists; and that there is nothing to be alarmed about if our immediate neighbors go Communist as a result of irresistible popular pressure.

Entitled to choice

Those who, for whatever reason, choose this position do not have to justify it. They merely choose the type of world they want to live in. I cannot understand how anyone could willingly choose to live in a regime in which the China of Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao, with all its naked brutality, is the dominant power. Yet, if Dr. Cairns wants to live in an Australia, which is part of a Communist-dominated Asia, he is entitled to his choice. If the pro-Communist Left in Australia is ready to settle for that future for Australia they are entitled to that choice. They are even entitled to attempt to persuade — but not to coerce or intimidate — other Australians that this is an acceptable type of world.

In other words, I am saying that this preference on the part of Dr. Cairns is a value-judgment. Those who agree with the values are not primarily concerned with the arguments. Those who do not necessarily accept values are entitled to examine the arguments, to discern how much is fact, how much is fiction, how much is part of what I call the 'mysticism' of pro-Communist life.

When Dr. Cairns implies that the Communist movements in Asia have captured Asian nationalism and are the popular movements which genuinely sway the Asian masses, I ask: Which Asians is he talking about? The Indians have a free vote — 450 million of them. So have the Japanese — 100 million of them; so have the Singapore Chinese; so have the Malaysians; so have the Filipinos. In anything approaching free elections, they have all rejected Communism with contempt. No free vote has ever given the Communists a majority in China or anywhere else; not even in Kerala where, in the recent Indian elections, the total vote for the two Communist Parties was 32 per cent.

The proposition that Communism has captured the nationalist movements and is, therefore, the 'wave of the future' in Asia, has somehow to overcome those hard facts before it can be accepted. So does the proposition that the Western 'presence' in Asia, if accompanied by the use of military power, will earn the hatred of Asians.

Lee Kuan Yew, who is as 'socialist' and as 'progressive' as Dr. Cairns, but is also Asian, says quite openly that the security of Singapore itself depends on the defeat of the Communist terrorists in South Vietnam and, if necessary, on a fifteen-year American military presence in that country.

The Koreans, the Thais, the Filipinos are themselves militarily involved in Vietnam; Souvanna Phouma, the neutralist Prime Minister of Laos, permits American planes to operate from his territory; since the January elections in Japan, the Japanese Government has left no doubt as to its favourable attitude to the enterprise in Vietnam.

Are these not Asians? Or do we merely define as authentic Asians only those who are opposed to the whole purport of Western policy in Asia?

Finally, when Dr. Cairns asks us to believe that military responses to Communist military changes in Asia will not be effective in deciding issues, I ask again: Which Asia is he speaking about?

Military aggression from Communist North Korea was met by military resistance in the 'fifties. It was because this military resistance was successful that South Korea is today an independent nation. Without it, the social and economic measures taken since could never have been taken. The military aggression of the Malayan Communists was met with military resistance. It was successful; hence the relatively free constitutional development and the relative prosperity of Malaya. The military rising of the Huks in the Philippines was met by military resistance, which alone made it possible to introduce social and economic measures.

When Soekarno proclaimed the military attack on Borneo, Britain put in 50,000 troops. Australia sent military aid. The successful military resistance to Soekarno in Borneo was not only a major factor in saving Malaysia. It was a major factor in turning the tide in Indonesia itself.

The failure in Laos

On the other hand, it is precisely because we did not give a military reply to Communism's military challenge in Laos in 1960-62, and in Vietnam in the same period, that the situation got out of hand in Thailand and South Vietnam, and that we have the awful blood-letting of today. We could have prevented the occupation of North-Eastern Laos in 1961-62 with the expenditure of one-twentieth of the blood and suffering which we have put into South Vietnam today as the result of that failure.

Put simply, the pattern of the future held out by Dr. Cairns and his supporters may be attractive to those who want his kind of world. Value-judgments are pretty generally arguable. Those who do not believe in inevitable 'waves of the future' would be better advised to examine the supporting arguments.

F.

I have examined these two reactions because they seem to me to sum up three-quarters of the Australian response to the 'minimum situation', with which South-East Asia confronts Australia. Dr. Cairns believes that Australia ought to adjust itself to a predominantly Communist South-East Asia. Mr. Holt — and Mr. Whitlam — seem to me to want safety without tears, without pressure and without urgency. With the greatest respect, I would submit that these propositions are unreal.

The facts indicate that there is nothing to prevent a democratic and largely European Australia from coming to terms with a largely non-Communist Asia.

They also indicate that, whether we like it or not, we are thrust into a position of real leadership with all its responsibilities. The Asians will accept from us what, for different reasons, they are loth to accept from Britain or the United States. The United States will expect us to carry a large part of the burden as the cost of the alliance.

The mixture of military, political, social, economic and cultural contact which is typified in Vietnam, and to a lesser extent in Thailand and Malaysia will, in my judgment be a very large part of the pattern of Australia's relationship with South-East Asia in the period under study, until the end of the century — that is, of course, unless we lose beforehand. It will enter into the life of most Australian homes. It will affect the lives and careers of many Australian boys. It will be a national encounter. It will also be a personal encounter.

As a national encounter, the emphasis will vary with the stability of the institutions of the different countries of the region. Where, as in Singapore, political institutions are stable, this stability will depend on the capacity of manufacturing industry to provide many thousands of jobs each year. That, in turn, will demand export markets in Australia, and a policy of forbearance in some sections of the manufacturing industry.

If the political institutions of India remain relatively stable — and this is doubtful — the encounter will be an expression of the peaceful arts of international aid and trade. This will cost us many millions of pounds, and it will ultimately affect the structure of our manufacturing industries.

Where the integrity of the institutions has been partly eroded, as in North-Eastern Thailand, the encounter will be primarily civilian but partly military. Twenty Snowy Mountains engineers in three years have built a hundred miles of feeder roads and brought half a million Lao peasants into the Thai economy, and partly out of the sphere of the guerrillas. This whole program has cost a few million pounds. Multiply this, and you may have no military problem in Thailand, and you will have no problem with your Snowy Mountain Authority.

Where guerrilla insurgency has developed into full-scale civil war, as in South Vietnam, the encounter will be in the first place military, to ensure the necessary degree of pacification, so that measures of social and economic reconstruction can be introduced at the second stage.

Facing the realities

These are the realities. They constitute a total challenge which demands a total response. In fact, they demand what I may crudely call a philosophy. The total response involves increased expenditure on defence and economic aid; the allotment of highly-skilled personnel to development works overseas. Both challenges, I believe, can be met best by a system of universal service devoted to civilian as well as military pursuits. The response will involve the re-direction of our trade, including the outlets of much of our primary industry; discipline over the development of some of our secondary industry, and a re-shaping not only of our external alliances, but of our internal political structure.

That is an inspiring challenge for Australians. In fact, those who do accept what is broadly called the Christian ethic ought to want Australia to make such a response, even if reasons of political and military security were not involved. But they are in fact involved. There is thus a double argument for the same program.

These measures are hard and, if undertaken, the pressure on Australia's democratic structure will be tremendous. It will demand a wholesale re-allocation of national resources. Within a relatively short time we could be spending 10 per cent of the Gross National Product on defence instead of 5 per cent. This would be \$2000 million at today's values. If we include expenditure on New Guinea, we could be spending 2 per cent of the Gross National Product on economic aid. This would be \$400 million.

Australians do not even begin to visualise what this sort of diversion of resources will mean in daily living. Briefly, it means that we will have to consume much less of our annual production and send much more abroad, whether as economic aid, as military equipment, or as exports. It means that the less essential industries will have to sacrifice investment funds, labor and materials to those which are directly related to the needs of survival; and that political parties must be brought to resist the powerful pressures which these industries will mount in their own defence.

These things have been done in time of war by a government backed with the power of the Defence Regulations, and able to use these to enforce direction of men, materials, capital issues, prices. Can this be done in peace-time by the ordinary inter-play of political parties. I do not know.

It is tempting to believe that some charismatic figure will arise who will persuade the parties by the force of his own personality; but even Churchill was unable to do this between the two World Wars. It can only be done if, side by side with the organised political parties, there are small, well-organised bodies with general support behind them, which can so move public opinion that political parties, unions, producer organisations, are compelled in their own self-interest to respond.

SUMMING UP THE CONVENTION

(TERRY FROMHOLTZ, Wagga Diocesan Organiser)

The Convention was planned very well, because the approach was to present a theoretical talk, "The Vocation of the Layman," and then to follow this by two other practical talks which could elaborate on the theory presented by the first talk.

I think I could not start better than by recounting a few of the ideas Dr. Paul Grundy gave us yesterday, particularly as there are some new faces in the audience today.

The central idea he put forward was that the vocation of the layman was really, in a way, continuing the creation begun by God. The creation was no static thing: it was begun by God and developing the vocation of the layman is to continue this development.

I would like to quote a short paragraph from Paul Grundy's talk which does make this point pretty well:

"Every activity, whether it be in agriculture or engineering or house-work, should be the means by which we express and deepen our love for God and His creation. The activities will at times be quite humdrum, and this means that they will vary greatly. Unlike the theologians, our means in many cases will be sheer physical labour, but the fact remains that it is through our jobs and responsibilities — not in spite of them — that we grow in love, share more fully in Christ's life and bring about the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, here and now."

To further this point, later on Paul said: "Quite often it is imagined that God's act of creating the world was something done once for all at the beginning. It's all over by the end of the Book of Genesis — not, perhaps, in seven days, but certainly finished now. We have only to think for a moment to see this is not so. New life is constantly being generated. The material world has been changing and evolving since time began, with an ever-increasing variety and complexity of forms and creatures. Rather than describe creation as a static act by which God began the world, it is more correct to describe creation as God's continuous action in forming and sustaining the world. Not just human history, but the whole pattern of the universe since time began is God's creation."

"God created a changing universe, and there is a very real way in which I as an engineer, and you as a farmer, co-operate in this act of creation."

Taking an active part

Let us look at this in practical terms as they came from your later discussion groups and questions. People began to look at things God created and how man has changed them. Iron was one example. We make it into steel and into machines; and these do the job of agriculture, which is a means of continuing God's initial act of creation. The tree created by God becomes timber for buildings and houses for us; plants become food; animals become food and clothing. So we are taking a very active part in continuing the acts of creation initially done by God.

When you look around some of the farms in this wheat-belt district, you realise that some of the developments of base metals such as steel have come a long way. When you see a farmer harvesting wheat with an automatic header, while sitting in an air-conditioned cabin, you realise how far we have developed the simple things God gave us to begin with.

Paul Grundy made a very good point when he spoke of the psalmists of old calling upon all God's creation to praise Him. Paraphrasing a little, he brought the psalm up to date in the language of Paul Grundy, the engineer:

"Praise Him dams and viaducts,
Transports on mighty highways,
Foundries with rivers of liquid steel.
Let all machines and ceaseless generators
reverberate the name of Yahweh!"

The dignity of work and the real value of work lie in continuing the initial act of God's creation was the idea he was putting forward. This thought was taken up by Fr. Duck in his Mass on Saturday, and he made a very good point.

The central point Fr. Duck put forward was that the Rural Movement and the liturgy seemed a very abstract idea; but when you look upon every act, every part of our work, every job as being a fulfilment of our vocation and co-operation with God, it is easy to see that every act of ours can be an act of worship of God. And isn't the liturgy something to do with the worship of God?

Unity in Convention

Fr. Duck showed that, rather than prepare a talk and give it, he would relate it to the initial talk. So did later speakers; and this is one reason why there was a tremendous unity in the Convention.

Perhaps we could not see the connection when we saw the programme, but each talk fitted together because the speakers took note of the ideas put forward by preceding speakers, and welded them into the ideas they had prepared.

Paul McGowan followed with "The Vocation of the Farmer;" and, in line with Paul Grundy, he spoke of the work of the farmer as subduing the earth — and quoted from Genesis.

He touched on very practical aspects of farming: that if you are going to have money to spend farming you must be a really good farmer; you must save your money and invest it in the land — and this means treating the land in the proper way.

Perhaps the most interesting point Paul made was that those things we regard as a threat to the family farm he regards as no threat at all, but rather as a source of great benefit.

Praise for Probate !

I have heard other members of the Rural Movement criticising probate; but Paul is the first member I have heard praise it. His point of view is that probate has done a tremendous job in making old farmers hand over their farms to their sons instead of hanging on to them until they died. He thought this a good and practical result of Probate, and one which — in some cases, at least — would not have been achieved by any other means. Then, he had an interesting point of view on income tax — that this has the effect of forcing partnerships where, previously, the father may have kept control of the farm too long.

Paul McGowan developed his talk, and it served as a useful introduction to Paul Wild's talk on "Aid to Under-developed Countries," without encroaching on the subject. Paul McGowan made the point that the vocation of the farmer "to subdue the earth" extends much further than his own farm, his own district, his own country. He said that Australia has made great advances in technical matters in agriculture, and these can be of great benefit to under-developed countries.

You will recall that the figures he quoted showed how production in the developed countries had risen tremendously in the past 20 years; but in under-developed countries it had remained static — in fact, some of these countries which were exporters of food before the war are now importers.

From this he drew the conclusion that technical know-how was needed; Australia has this to give — in some fields, such as tropical pastures, she led the world.

Asians are "people"

Passing on to the talk by Mr. Paul Wild, the main message was, I think, summed up in Bill Mannes' comment on it — that Asians are "people." Paul's description of the people he met and the conditions he saw in the Philippines made us realise that these certainly are "persons." He brought home to us the need for us to help them, and he made our Asian Aid schemes look a little more alive.

He pointed out that, because of our experience in Asian Aid over such a long time, we provide the inspiration and the opportunity for Australian farmers to help Asia. The methods we use are proven. We help organisations in Asia which are doing a job in Asia. This is much better than deciding as an individual that you would like to do something, and then send money there. It is much better to make use of organisations which are operating in Asia.

We are convinced that these organisations are doing a worthwhile job, so we are helping them. They will probably continue their work whether or not we help them; but we think that directing our aid through them is the best way possible.

Paul Wild also made the point that the other very necessary way of helping under-developed countries is by forming public opinion. We can do this by taking part in our farmers' organisations; and also — as Geoff Potter pointed out — by co-operating in rural cities in such projects as the "Sister City" idea.

The third point Paul made was expanded later by Miss Beulah Carter — the importance of our meeting Asians and getting as many Australians as we can to meet them. After listening to Miss Carter, you realise that it is a very simple matter to meet an Asian — in fact, there are two Asians coming up this way next month. One of them is Alberto Encomienda, from the Philippines Federation of Free Farmers, who will be studying the Rural Movement; the other is an Asian student who will visit here — it is very easy to get an Asian student to visit you for a holiday.

Summarising the Convention, I should like to make a suggestion from the ideas put forward, but which has not yet been formulated.

Representation at Rome Congress

There is an International Congress of the Lay Apostolate in Rome this year, and the Rural Movement has been given a place in the delegation of thirty representing the lay apostolate in Australia. We must think seriously whether we want the Rural Movement represented. Not only is this an International Congress of lay apostolate bodies; there is also a Congress of such bodies specialising in rural affairs, and we are affiliated with this organisation. There is, therefore, a double reason why we should have representation in Rome, whether we find a member who can pay his own way, or whether we find the money ourselves to send someone . . . This is one thought I would like to leave with you.

I feel it has been a very fruitful Convention; and perhaps the thing that impressed me most was the distance some people travelled to attend. When people travel from Swan Hill, from South Australia, from Condobolin and places further than Melbourne, it shows that they have a real interest in this organisation.

This inspires the officers and organisers of the Rural Movement to put greater effort into their work, and to provide more scope, more training, more of everything that is called for, particularly for the younger members.

The late Perce Malone

With the death of Mr. Daniel Peter (Perce) Malone some little time ago, the Rural Movement lost one of its oldest and most loyal and practical members. Written by one who knew him well — Athol Howman, of Vasey, via Balmoral — this tribute is, indeed, fitting.

Perce was Group leader here for many years, and also President of the Wimmera Region. No doubt, he would have been the most active of our Group members, as he mixed more than most with other people. Being a bachelor, he was always pleased to accept hospitality and spent much time at week-ends at people's homes. He was so well-informed on a great variety of subjects that his presence was welcomed wherever he went. He was not backward on the many occasions that came his way to take the opportunity to further the ideas of the Rural Movement, his strong political beliefs, etc.

He had a natural tendency (Irish tendency) to be strong in his condemnation. The fact that he was so well-informed can be accounted for by the fact that he read a lot — and it was the type of reading not many people do. He did not get a daily or local paper, at least in the latter years, when I knew him best. He read News-Weekly, the Sunday Visitor, Hansard (Parliamentary debates) and the like. Television did not escape his strong condemnation: "A flamin' lot of rubbish they

put over — not a thing good all night, and one flamin' advertisement after another. Hell, they get on my goat, I'd sooner have a book any time."

Perce's greatest efforts in the sphere of Catholic Action would have been almost unintended. His natural tendency to put forward his strong views and reasoned opinions did for him what many others would have found a difficult task to perform. Active in sporting bodies, it was only natural for him to carry his Catholic Action into that sphere.

His younger days were spent rabbiting on the 20,000-acre property. "Glendinning." His sister was married to the manager. Perce was also stable-boy and farm-hand, often camping out in a tent all the week cleaning dams in the dry time. He would arrive back at the station homestead with his team of horses on the Saturday afternoons and head back to camp on the Sunday evenings.

His sister, by the way, went to "Glendinning" as a bride, and left there when she was over eighty years of age. Perce's niece, Nellie Patterson, was fairly well known to people in the Rural Movement.

The "Glendinning" property of 20,000 acres was cut up after the First World War into about 10 blocks of approximately 1000 acres each, leaving 10,000 acres still with the original property. Perce applied for one of the blocks and got it at that time. There was a surplus building at the homestead and it was shifted over to his block. The two "Glendinning" teams and another from a neighbouring property were assembled, and the building put on skids and dragged over to the site of Perce's house.

It would no doubt, be at this stage that Perce began to live alone. He did not lose contact however. He had a particularly good horse and used to harness him up in the rubber-tyred gig and go to Hamilton. He would set out in the morning, and often return that same night — 30 miles each way, 60 miles in the day.

Later on, of course, he had a car. I think he had only two over the years — the original, a Rugby that he had for a long time, and a Holden. This car went from 1950 until its owner's death. It looked a bit of a wreck at the finish, and it will not now be sold, as it is a long way from being road-worthy.

Perce was a good farmer. At one time, he told me that he had paid £40,000 in Income Tax in ten years; but there is little doubt that he would die with very little money. It seemed to be generally known that he would lend money without security. The amount of money people borrowed from him and did not pay back was terrific. Some were dishonest; others went insolvent; some just did not meet their payments — and I guess they never will now.

I believe the lessons learned in the Gospel Discussions at N.C.R.M. meetings influenced Perce in being charitable to those who sought his help in financial aspects. I guess that the fact that many took advantage of his generosity will not be worrying Perce now.

The only occasion Perce used any of his money directly to help through the N.C.R.M. in this particular district on paper was to give assistance to Mr. Bert Smith to buy sheep essential to establish himself. I wrote an article about that for Rural Life some years ago. I was in that transaction with Perce, and the money was paid back.

(To add to these personal details: We recall the time when Primary Produce Gift Scheme funds were nil, and a genuine loan applicant needed £500 desperately. Perce advanced the money, saying that he wanted the principal repaid when it suited the borrower, with the interest to go to P.P.G.S. funds.

Perce attended many Conventions, the last at Bendigo in April, 1966. He took his usual keen interest in the talks and discussions, contributing to the latter commonsense, down-to-earth observations so characteristic of him.

It can be truly said that the Rural Apostolate was a way of life to him. In writing that on behalf of all members of the Rural Movement we know that we can pay him no greater tribute. May he rest in peace. Editor R.L.)